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January/February 2007
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Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER

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PA Fish & Boat Commission web site:
www.fish.state.pa.us

Winter Streams & Ice



The Keystone State's Official Fishing & Boating Magazine



PROTECT
CONSERVE
ENHANCE

Privatization of Waters and Tithing to Conservation



by Douglas J. Austen, Ph.D.
Executive Director
PA Fish & Boat Commission

PENNSYLVANIA FISH & BOAT COMMISSION
RESOURCE FIRST
PROTECT • CONSERVE • ENHANCE

As I was walking in to one of my favorite streams to fish, I noticed yet another of those increasingly frequent "No Trespassing" signs hanging on a row of trees. As if it wasn't bad enough to see a single sign, the landowner seemed to think that it was necessary to nail a sign to trees every 10 feet or so along his property boundary. Literally a browse line of yellow signs added an unwanted color to the woodlot. I got the message quite clearly and kept on walking.

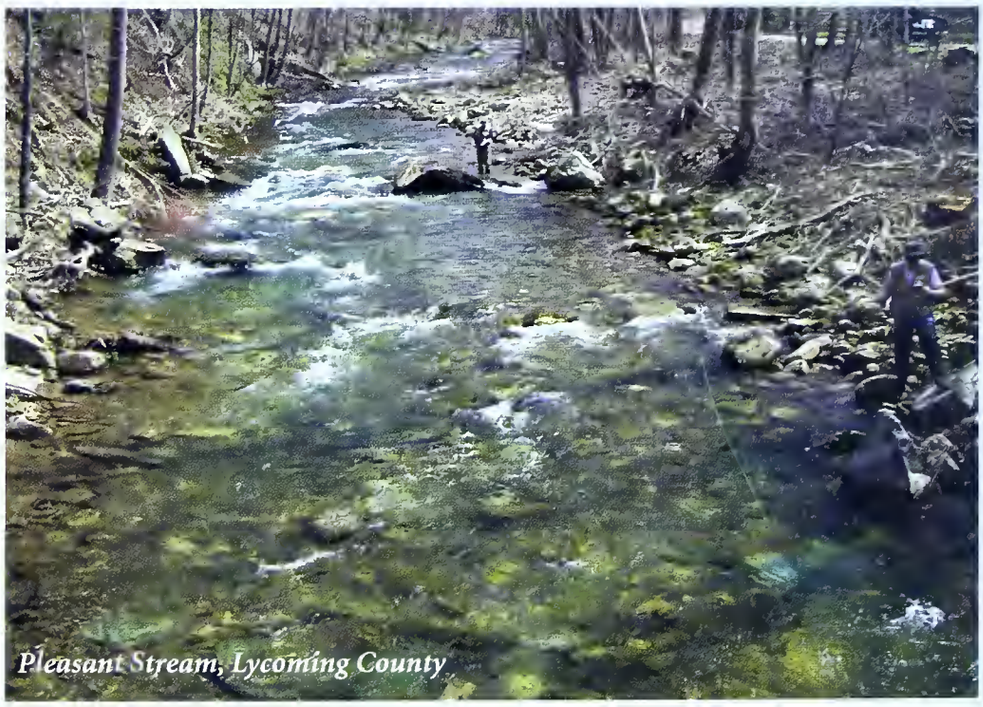
Though disappointed, it was hard to fault a landowner for taking that action. I could clearly see from the dirt road that the stream had been subject to littering. It was equally obvious that people were riding four-wheelers through the property—most likely without permission—and even in the stream (illegally).

Is it any wonder, then, that we are seeing an increase in the trend of privatization of waters, a phenomenon that closely follows what is happening with hunting?

Pennsylvania, even with its wealth of public lands, is very susceptible to this movement. Of our stocked trout waters, 83 percent are on private lands. About 70 percent of our wild trout waters are on private lands, and 59 percent of our Class A trout waters are also on private lands—a sobering set of numbers, indeed.

Of course, your Fish & Boat Commission is increasingly active in purchasing fishing access easements. Through funds paid into the Erie Access account, with every purchase of the Lake Erie Permit or combination stamp, we are working on purchasing property or the right to access private property to fish on the streams that flow into Lake Erie. We are eager to expand this work to the rest of the Commonwealth, in part through wonderful collaboration with Secretary Mike DiBerardinis and the good folks in the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources as well as many other partners.

But even that is not enough. We will certainly be able to protect and provide access to many areas, but we cannot do it all. Much of the responsibility of maintaining access to privately held waters is in your hands. This charge includes not only the simple act of not littering and cleaning up litter, but also the stewardship of these resources for our use and for that of generations to follow. When Pennsylvanians passed the very progressive constitutional amendment,



photos-Art Michaels

Of our stocked trout waters, 83 percent are on private lands. About 70 percent of our wild trout waters are on private lands, and 59 percent of our Class A trout waters are also on private lands—a sobering set of numbers, indeed.



Loyalsock Creek, Sullivan County

What if the sportsmen and women and youth of Pennsylvania started working toward a conservation tithe in time or money? Would that make a difference? Think of the litter that could be picked up, the habitat that could be restored, and the volunteer organizations that would flourish.

accomplished in part because of the work of former Commission Executive Director Ralph Abele, the challenge was clearly set:

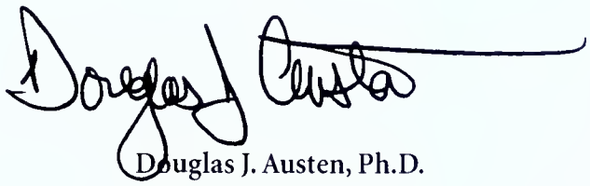
> *The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.*

We have the right, and with such a right comes an obligation. It is only words unless we are willing to dedicate part of ourselves to make it real. This is what stewardship is all about.

What does this mean for all of us anglers and boaters? Simply, we need to play an increasingly active role in ensuring that our streams and lakes are clean and healthy. For some of you this is a given. You have embraced the concept of a resource steward. This may be as simple as carrying a garbage bag to the stream to pick up litter. Or it may be more substantial, such as volunteering in an organization to protect open space to work on a habitat restoration project. I would like to suggest that we take this concept to the next level. We should consider the concept of tithing to conservation.

Did I lose you on that one? Our church just went through the process of its annual commitment campaign where we are all asked to give back a percentage of what we have been given. This is called tithing, and generally 10 percent is what is accepted. Similarly, we have been given the wondrous natural resources not only to enjoy but for which we are also stewards. Think about the time or money that you spend on fishing and boating, or for that matter, bird-watching or hunting. How many hours or days do you spend in that activity? Take one-tenth of that and consider investing that into being a resource steward. For most of us that calculation would be astonishing.

I have to admit that my family doesn't currently meet the tithing request of our church, but we are working toward that commitment. What if the sportsmen and women and youth of Pennsylvania started working toward a conservation tithe in time or money? Would that make a difference? Think of the litter that could be picked up, the habitat that could be restored, and the volunteer organizations that would flourish. Think about the landowner who posted his property because of littering. You bet that it would make a difference. The question is, are you up to the challenge?



Douglas J. Austen, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Casting Around



Makeover

Everything in nature gets a makeover. Fish grow from eggs to fry and then to adults. Some insects go through egg, larval, pupal, and adult stages. People experience phases. Our rivers and streams cut new courses. The Earth's plates shift. Everything grows and adapts—including magazines.

Beginning this year, our issues have themes. Bringing together most of each issue's content this way provides you with more specific expectations for each issue's content. It lets you be both familiar with each issue's overall material and, at the same time, pleasantly surprised with each new issue's specific features.

This issue's theme is "Winter Streams & Ice." Most articles in this issue relate directly to that theme. Consider "Northwest PA's Iced Panfishing Secrets," by Kelly Houghton, on **page 8**; this issue's "Angler Profiles" column, on **page 12**; Mike Bleech's feature "Ice Fishing and the Water Column," on **page 15**; and Jennifer Bilott's article "Ice Fishing for the First Time," on **page 17**.

Charles R. Meck's fly-tying piece "The March Brown Wet Fly," on **page 29**, and "Your Fishing Field Guide," by Carl Haensel, on **page 30**, reveal another new aspect of this year's magazine content: Both recurring features focus on the same fly. Charles R. Meck's piece shows how to tie it with step-by-step instructions and close-up photographs, and Carl Haensel's "Your Fishing Field Guide" reveals how to fish the fly. Furthermore, the lineup of flies for 2007 issues includes those that you can purchase readily, in addition to tying yourself.

Trout anglers will want to read the article "2007 Adult Trout Stocking Program Changes," by Tom Greene, on **page 22**. This annual feature includes details on the addition of new waters to the stocking program, the removal of waters from the stocking program, and which waters will receive more stocking than before.

You'll also find new recurring features in 2007 issues. "Saved by the Jacket" is true stories about how wearing a life jacket saved the contributor's life. This material may appear in the "Currents" section (**page 56** in this issue) or as a sidebar to a feature. It is designed to encourage people to wear a life jacket. The "Cast Away" column, **page 28**, which began in the September/October 2006 issue, shows where you can find the best fishing or previously unheralded great opportunities. Spring Gearhart's "Cooperative Nursery Partnerships," **page 44**, which also began in 2006, spotlights nurseries and the volunteers in the Commission's Cooperative Nursery Program. Our new "Fishing & Boating Events Calendar," in this issue on **page 7**, keeps you attuned to the latest happenings.



photos-WCO Dave Kaneski

One last new item: Grass shrimp are in the Monongahela River. No—really. It's true. See **page 60**.—*Art Michaels, Editor.*

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The mission of the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission is to provide fishing and boating opportunities through the protection and management of aquatic resources.

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Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER

The Keystone State's Official Fishing and Boating Magazine

January/February 2007
Volume 76 Number 1

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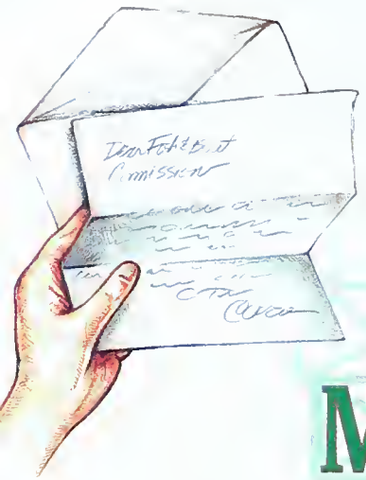
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On the cover

This issue's cover shows a variety of winter catches from last year. These anglers received Commission Angler Awards for their catches. Visit the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**, for more details on the Angler Award Program. On the web site's main page, hold your cursor over "Fish," and in the drop-down menu that appears, click on "Pennsylvania Fishes." Then navigate to "Angler Award Program."



MAIL

The three bears

It was 5 a.m. on June 17, 2006, the opening day of bass season, when I showed up at my favorite lake to fish. Several cars were already there, and I started to become anxious that someone may be in my favorite fishing hole, so I wasted no time and started walking through the woods. Luckily, no one was in my favorite spot. I quickly set up for an enjoyable morning. I stood out in the water about 6 to 8 feet from shore in 6 inches of cool, clear water. It was a foggy morning. The sun was nowhere near up yet to burn off the morning fog. All I had to do was wait for that first hit of the season.

At 5:30, I heard a sound behind me, and I assumed it was another fisherman and that he was going to ask how I was doing and what pattern I was using, so I turned around. There directly behind me only 40 feet away was a black bear. The bear was walking past me, so I thought that this was one of the greatest things I've ever experienced—to see a bear up close in its natural habitat, something I'd remember forever.

The bear wasn't that big as black bears go. It was around 3 feet to the shoulder and I estimated it to weigh around 200 to 250 pounds. Then I heard the snapping of sticks to my right. Another bear followed the first one about 50 feet behind. This bear was much bigger than the first, 4 feet high or more and a lot heavier—I guessed about 400 to 500 pounds.

At the sight of this one, I became a little alarmed, but since the second one was also walking past and following the same path, all seemed fine, and now I was having an even better experience feeling some relief.

As the second bear was directly behind me and the first one walked off to my left, I heard a *woof*—not the sound one wants to hear with two bears already nearby. Looking up and to the right, standing on a mound and looking down at me was the third and biggest bear of the three. I'm sure it was there only a matter of seconds before it continued to follow the other two, but to me, that moment seemed a lot longer. At that point, I realized I was surrounded by bears and had only the lake in front of me.

As the biggest bear watched me, I slowly took a couple of steps farther out into the water and put my hand on my wallet. My impromptu plan, as good as it may have been, was to toss my wallet up on shore and dive into the lake. Then I would swim as far away underwater as I possibly could and hope that I could get out of sight—and out of the bears' minds. I know bears can swim, but I don't believe black bears can swim under water. Nevertheless, I'm lucky that the last bear just walked by as did the other two.

It was about a half-hour before Todd Vinton, a fellow fisherman, came by and I was able to tell my story. But until then, I kept a very, very close eye out for bear number four.—*Dominick Gigliotti, Waymart, PA.*

Fish story

On an early August Saturday, my wife and I took two children, Jillian, 6, and Kyle, 8, fishing on the lower Susquehanna River. Kyle had been fishing once, but this was Jill's first fishing trip. The day was warm and sunny with a lot of boat traffic, but I knew a quiet cove where worms with a bobber would produce a few panfish. We loaded a big lunch—we knew we would be hungry even if the fish weren't—and the required bait-fishing gear into the boat. We donned our life jackets and headed down the river. We had a quiet, fishy looking cove to ourselves.

After anchoring, baiting up, and giving instructions on being patient and watching the bobber, the fishing began. The first minutes produced a lot of reeling in to make sure the fish hadn't taken the bait. While checking Kyle's bait, we heard Jill starting to giggle and squeal. When we looked her way, she was cranking on the reel with the rod bent and the bobber under the water. Several more cranks of the reel brought a nice 7-inch bluegill to the boat—not bad for a first fish. After a quick photo, we returned the bluegill to the water.

Within minutes, Jill was giggling and reeling again. This time the rod was doubled over. It wasn't long before she had boated another saucer-sized bluegill almost 9 inches long. Within 10 minutes, she had caught her first fish and a fish that qualified for a Fish & Boat Commission Catch and Release Award.

That wasn't a bad start, but Jill wasn't finished—she boated four more fish, including a smallmouth bass. By the way, Jill was the only person to boat a fish during the outing.

The lesson of my story: When you take a kid fishing, you don't have to catch a fish to have fun.—*Ray Myers, Paradise, PA.*

BACKTALK

The Fish & Boat Commission invites you to write or email letters to the editor if you have a question or concern or something to say about fish and fishing, or boats and boating. Please hold letters to no more than 200 words and include the writer's name and address. Letters and email become the property of the Commission, and they are edited for clarity.

Address all correspondence to: The Editor, *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater*, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000; or contact the Commission through its web site: **www.fish.state.pa.us**.

Fishing & Boating Events Calendar

January through March 2007

January 6-13, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
Pennsylvania Farm Show.
Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg.

January 8
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission with special guests.
Pennsylvania Farm Show.
Fishin' from the Kitchen Day.
PA Preferred® Culinary Connection stage.

January 11-14, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
Fishing Expo & Boat Show,
Timonium, Maryland.

January 18-21, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
Reading Sport, Travel & Outdoor Show.
Reading Expo Center, Reading.

January 19-21, 26-28, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
Pittsburgh Boat Show, Pittsburgh.

January 23-24, 2007
Commission meeting.
PA Fish & Boat Commission headquarters, Harrisburg. Starts 8 a.m. both days.

January 24-28, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
Harrisburg Auto & Boat Show.
Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg.

January 25-28, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
The Early Bird Sports Show.
Bloomsburg Fairgrounds, Bloomsburg.

January 26-28, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
Northeast Ohio Sports & Travel Expo,
Akron Ohio.

January 26-28, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
The Fly Fishing Show, Somerset,
New Jersey.

January 27-28, 2007
Warren County's Winter Fest, Chapman State Park. Includes an ice fishing contest, an ice fishing demonstration by the Commission, ice rescue demonstration by the Commission and Glade Twp. Volunteer Fire Dept. Water Rescue staff, snow-sculpting, sleigh rides, figure skating exhibition, sled dog races, food & craft vendors. Contact Christopher Seymour, Warren County Recreation Director, 814-728-3490; Email Seymours@Atlanticbb.net.

February 3 -11, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
Eastern Sports & Outdoor Show.
Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg.

February 10-11, 2007
"Winter Fun Days," Pymatuning State Park Beach 2, shelter 4. Snowmobile rides, food & craft vendors, ice fishing demonstrations, ice rescue demonstrations. Contact Esther Loucks, 724-932-3978.

February 8-11, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
Washington County Sports Show.
Washington Crown Center, Washington.

February 10-11, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
Sportsman's Expo, Parsippany,
New Jersey.

February 14-18, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
Allegheny Sports Show.
Pittsburgh ExpoMart, Pittsburgh.

February 16-18, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
***PA Outdoor Times* Hunting & Fishing Show**, Altoona.

February 16-18, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
Hamburg Sports Show, Hamburg.

February 17-18, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
Cabin Fever Expo, Mifflinburg High School, Union County.

February 23-25, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
York Outdoor Show, York.

February 23-25, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
Jaffa Sports Show, Altoona.

February 24-25, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
Moraine Angler's Show, Butler.

March 1-4, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
World Fishing & Outdoor Exposition,
Suffern, New York.

March 2-4, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
Erie Outdoor, Sport & Travel Expo, Erie.

March 2-11, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
Pittsburgh Home & Garden Show,
Pittsburgh.

March 8-11, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
PA Garden Expo.
Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg.

March 8-11, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
Western NY Sport & Travel Expo.
Hamburg, New York.

March 22-25, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission.
Philadelphia Boat Show, Philadelphia.

March 31, 2007
The first opening day of the **2007 trout season** begins at 8 a.m. in 18 southeastern counties. Go to www.fishandboat.com, or see page 64.

Reminder:

April 14, 2007
The **2007 regular trout season** opens at 8 a.m. in the rest of the state. To locate trout stocking nearest you, visit www.fishandboat.com.

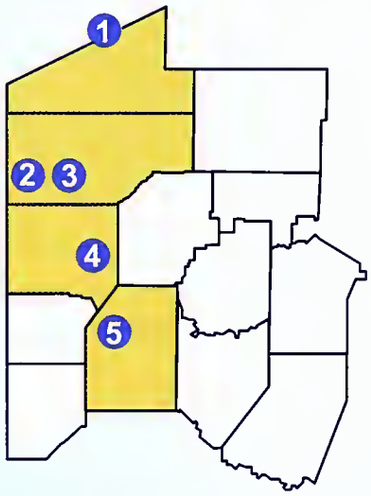
Northwest PA's ICED Panfishing Secrets

by Kelly Houghton



photos-WCO Dave Kaneski

The main ingredient to catching panfish under the ice is finding them. Fish tend to school, so if you find one, others should be nearby. Word of mouth on where anglers are catching fish is often the best way to locate schools.



Northwest PA's Panfishing Secrets

1. Presque Isle and Bay, Presque Isle State Park, Erie County.
2. Pymatuning Lake, Pymatuning State Park, Crawford County.
3. Conneaut Lake, Crawford County.
4. Lake Wilhelm, Maurice K. Goddard State Park, Mercer County.
5. Lake Arthur, Moraine State Park, Butler County.

Northwest Pennsylvania offers some terrific opportunities for ice fishing for panfish. Knowing how and where to tempt the fish are your keys to success.

The main ingredient to catching panfish under the ice is finding them. Fish tend to school, so if you find one, others should be nearby. Word of mouth on where anglers are catching fish is often the best way to locate schools.

During the summer, anglers constantly move in search of fish. Even though mobility is also an important concept in ice fishing, it's often tough to sell. Moving becomes difficult if you consider drilling holes. This is where today's modern augers come into play. If you fish with a few friends, one power auger for the group is plenty. Electric power augers are easily attachable to rechargeable drills, making your fishing gear extra lightweight.

Serious ice anglers also use a flasher depthfinder. Not only does a depthfinder alert you to the presence of fish, but it also provides you with a reading on how fish react to your presentation. A high-powered flasher reveals the depth, fish, bottom content, debris, and even your lure in a three-color display. Sonar units are also effective, but they present only a picture of what has passed under the ice, not the immediate whole picture.

Knowing when to fish is important. Fishing smaller lakes, including ponds, early in the winter has proven effective because after snow covers the lake and it gets later into the winter, a lack of oxygen can catch up with these smaller waters, and the fish become tough to catch. Then they're just trying to survive, and they tend not to feed as frequently.

In the middle of the season, fish mid-sized waters. That's when to seek out green weeds. This is where the oxygen is still ample. Generally, a better opportunity for quality panfish occurs during the early part of the season. There is something about the first few weeks of a frozen lake that fish love.

All the fish in a lake aren't worth a plunge into frigid water. Safety is always first, so monitor the ice to ensure that it's safe and thick enough. You can consider clear ice that is at least 4 inches thick safe ice for a single angler.

Ice fishing with bait is most important. Panfish are often together at this time, so use grubs instead of minnows. If you use minnows, use just the head because coldwater crappies and other panfish rarely bite big baits. If you check the stomach contents of the panfish you catch through the ice, you will rarely find minnows. In addition, work your lure above the eyesight of crappies. They will rise for bait, but rarely will they swim down for bait.

Regardless of the time of the season, small jigs and spoons work well. Although many folks have their own

tactics and tricks, my experiences and those of my family have always involved jigging with small spoons with grubs, mealworms, or maggots attached. You will also catch more fish and heftier-sized panfish on ultralight line. Ultra-thin line lets you jig small baits, while heavier line will hinder the action of your lure, resulting in your hooking fewer fish.

As long as your drag is set loosely and you're using an ultralight rod, 2-pound test is more than enough to handle even the biggest panfish. Those who use a hand line can use 4-pound test. But remember that in winter, smaller anything is generally better.

Rely on the water clarity and light levels to help you determine which jig colors to use. In stained water, any bright color, such as chartreuse or orange, has proven effective. Silver, black, and lime-green work well in clear water, and red accents are always desirable. In deep, clouded water and at night, glow-in-the-dark lures are a definite advantage.

Knowledge must be paired with great locations if you want buckets of panfish to clean. Here are five of my favorite spots.

1 Presque Isle and Bay, Presque Isle State Park, Erie County. Presque Isle is a 3,200-acre sandy peninsula that arches into Lake Erie. Winter anglers are among the 4 million people who annually visit Presque Isle. Presque Isle Bay, Misery Bay, and in the Marina area are the park's hotspots. Misery Bay, directly west of Horseshoe Pond and north of the Perry Monument, are great places to catch crappies, perch, and bluegills. The water in these areas is about 9 feet deep. The shallow Horseshoe Pond, with an average depth of 6 feet, is on the peninsula's southernmost tip near the U.S. Coast Guard station. This pond provides great habitat for panfish. Presque Isle Bay is also a favorite angling spot.

2 Pymatuning Lake, Pymatuning State Park, Crawford County. Pymatuning is located on the state line between Pennsylvania and Ohio. It offers 17,000 acres of water for many different activities. Ice fishing has become more popular throughout the years when perch, crappies, and bluegills become easy targets. The best ice fishing spots at Pymatuning are the areas around the Jamestown Marina and #2 beach, both found in the south end of the lake. On the north end, Tuttle Point is another popular panfish location. Once park personnel OK the ice conditions, they will open the gates to the Tuttle Point Campground and Beach so that ice anglers can reach this area.

3 Conneaut Lake, Crawford County. Conneaut Lake, located 10 miles west of Meadville, is the largest natural lake in Pennsylvania, occupying about 1,000 acres. In the winter, anglers can find good fishing in the lake's northern areas, where the water is the shallowest and weed beds are present. However, if you're angling for panfish, disregard the clusters of anglers lining the south end of the lake near Conneaut Lake's downtown area. These anglers are after predator fish, like pike and muskies.



As long as your drag is set loosely and you're using an ultralight rod, 2-pound test is more than enough to handle even the biggest panfish. Those who use a hand line can use 4-pound test. But remember that in winter, smaller anything is generally better.

4 Lake Wilhelm, Maurice K. Goddard State Park, Mercer County. Lake Wilhelm, 1,860 acres, is popular with anglers, especially ice anglers. Also known as the "stumps," the upper portion of the lake is managed by the Pennsylvania Game Commission and is part of State Game Lands #270. The game lands are the first spot to freeze and become safe, making eager anglers jump at the crappies and bluegills that dwell there. The dam area is also another popular fishing spot. However, that area usually freezes over with safe ice about two weeks after the rest of the lake freezes.

5 Lake Arthur, Moraine State Park, Butler County. This waterway is 50 miles north of Pittsburgh. Thousands of people visit the 3,225-acre lake each year, some of whom come for great ice fishing. For bluegills and crappies, fish just off the shore at the Zion Church access. Also try midway up the shallow end of the Muddy Creek Finger, along with the area between the "Big Island" at McDonel's access and Lakeview shoreline. Common panfish species you'll entice include crappies, bluegills, and yellow perch. Ice fishing is permitted in the Game Propagation Area from January 15 through March 15, conditions permitting.

Lastly, heed ice safety considerations. You can find a wealth of practical safety information and useful how-to and where-to details on the Commission web site's ice fishing pages. Visit **www.fish.state.pa.us**, and on the main page's left side, hold your cursor over "Fish." In the drop-down menu that appears, click on "Fishing Fundamentals," and on that page click on "Ice Fishing."

Rediscovering Ice Fishing

by Marcus Schneck

"Fish, fish, fish! The flag, the flag," yelped the 8-year-old as he skittered across the snow-covered ice toward the recently augered hole and the bouncing flag of the tip-up.

Gone were the frozen toes and fingers that had been so central to his thoughts just a second earlier. The hunger of what soon turned out to be a 7-inch crappie cruising about 15 feet beneath the ice of Kaercher Creek Lake in northern Berks County had completely altered the reality of the moment.

The young novice had passed from deadly boredom to bone-chilling discomfort to fish-on excitement in the tick-tock of just 15 or 20 minutes. At the end of transformation, with his first, flopping, through-the-ice fish in hand, my son Casey emerged as an ice fisherman.

And with him was a father returned to the hard-water sport he had left behind a decade or so before, as time demands of career, family, and other recreation were answered. Cold feet, numb nose, and sometimes slow action can make the competition steep for an outdoorsman's attention.

But Casey was eager to try all things outdoors, and I was just as eager to give him the chance. That was my fishing, hunting, trapping, camping, backpacking, and what-have-you buddy in development there. What he tried, enjoyed, and longed to repeat would dictate much of my future time in the outdoors.

So far, he had enjoyed everything outdoors that he had tried, from fishing to canoeing to tagging along for squirrel hunting and running a trap line.

When he asked about ice fishing a few weekends earlier, as we slipped and slid across the ice of our favorite neighborhood lake on an afternoon's hike, I knew it was time to go digging through the gear chests and bins for some too-long untouched gear.



photo-Cindy Haensel

Entrance to the sport of ice fishing, or re-entrance, poses no major barriers.

And, now, with ice fishing apparently on the thumbs-up list, saving that old gear seemed to have been a very good idea.

However, as must be expected with an 8-year-old, Casey's enthusiasm for this "new" sport began to dim quickly as the excitement of his first catch faded. Temperatures on the downside of 32, with just enough wind whipping across the frozen lake to add a wind-chill edge, soon were cutting through the protection of thermals and snowsuit again. Tip-ups that just sat there steadily beat the drum of renewed boredom.

Conversations passed about the 8 inches of ice now separating us from the waters we had splashed in just six months ago. The lake's resident flock of Canada geese unhappily looked for some open water, and the half-dozen other anglers on the ice began to lose their ability to draw much response from the kid, so it was time to pull out the reinforcements.

"Here, drill another hole. I have something new for you to try," I said, handing him the old hand-driven auger. "You pick a spot this time, not too close to the other holes, or too far away, either."

Casey had shown enthusiasm for working the strange tool earlier and had made some progress on a couple of holes, the locations of which I had chosen. His natural desire to do it for himself now played in to that, and again the cold and the sometimes tedium of the sport were driven from his small frame.

Keeping the corner of one eye on him, while giving the appearance that he was totally in charge and on his own in this latest project, I looked through the gear bag resting atop Casey's sled and pulled out one of my old ice-fishing rods.

After we had finished the hole—he eventually did ask me to finish the job—Casey began bobbing the short rod up and down over the hole, a tiny red-and-white spoon tipped with a waxworm working the waters under his feet. His technique improved quickly, with just a few gentle tips and observations from the old man.

"Whoa! Something's got it," he half-whispered, half-screamed a few minutes later. "No, wait. It's gone."

Replacing the stolen waxworm with a fresh one, he lowered the lure back to roughly the same depth and got in just one or two jigs with the rod before something snagged the offering and kept it.

"I got him this time," Casey assured me. "He's coming up."

The second crappie of the day splashed through the hole.

And then all was quiet again. The experience slipped toward a third hour without any further interest from the fish. A youngster's interest began to dwindle again, only partially rekindled by a steaming cup of hot chocolate from the thermal bottle.

It was time to load up the gear and fish, and head for the car before too much of a good thing killed future enthusiasm for a sport that I now recalled from a decade earlier with nostalgic fondness.

"When are we coming again?" Asked Casey, as he threw himself into a belly-slide across the ice. "Can we play a game when we get home? Great. I really like this ice fishing."

The hard-water sport can be a great family activity, if the realities are kept in mind. Temperatures are going to fall below our normal comfort range. Winds are going to blow. And all adverse conditions are going to be magnified by the often slow action of the sport.

Entrance to the sport, or re-entrance, poses no major barriers. We had gear specific to the sport stored away, but buying the basics will carry no big price tag, and improvising from gear already on hand is entirely possible, particularly when trying out the sport to gauge family interest.

A hand-driven auger to cut the holes in the ice is $30 to $40 new, even less used, and can be replaced with any bar, pole, or pipe with something resembling a chisel-edge at one end. Tip-ups are only a few bucks. Low-end ice-fishing rods cost just a bit more, and can be replaced with the discarded tip of some old, longer rod with an improvised handle and a reel already on hand.

Some of the same lures used in warmer weather, notably jigs and spoons, are perfect for working through the ice.

Bait is cheap and easy to come by, ranging from small minnows, worms, grubs, waxworms, and mealworms available at bait and pet shops to cheese, corn, and marshmallows off the grocer's shelves to cut bait from the first fish caught or from previous fish caught.

Maximizing family enjoyment comes down to dressing for the activity and finding active fish.

Boots that are both perfectly waterproof and well insulated are the most important gear, followed by layering from top of head to tip of toe, all covered by an insulated snowsuit, snowmobile suit, or something similar. Well-insulated headgear, possibly with something to cover the nose and mouth, and gloves are mandatory.

Bluegills, which often are found at underwater cover in 8 to 15 feet of water; crappies, which tend to travel in schools near underwater structure at a depth of a dozen to two dozen feet; and perch, which like cover at 20 feet and deeper, are the top choices for a family trying the sport.

A reliable watch is the final essential piece of gear, helping the parent stay just inside the too-much-of-a-good-thing threshold and avoid possible objections to future trips onto the ice.

Marcus Schneck is outdoor editor of The Patriot-News *in Harrisburg, editor of* Destinations *magazine in Hamburg, and a contributor to several other outdoor publications. He and his son, now age 14, are still trying out new pursuits in the outdoors while holding on to those they like best.*



photo-Dave Kaneski



ANGLER PROFILES

by Art Michaels

Expert Ice Angler Dave Putnam

Northcentral Pennsylvanian Dave Putnam began ice fishing in the early 1970s. His devotion to the sport and experience have helped him cultivate know-how that other ice anglers would envy.

"Walleyes are my favorite quarry, but I most often target perch and crappies," he says. "Trout are also a favorite because the trout lakes I fish usually have safe ice before Christmas. We have had a lot of fun on family ice fishing trips for trout."

Dave likes the Allegheny Reservoir, McKean County, for walleyes, and for trout he frequents small lakes like Poe Valley Lake, Centre County, and Marilla Reservoir, McKean County. For panfish he's had good success at Hills Creek Lake, Tioga County, and Sayers Lake, Centre County. "Presque Isle Bay, Erie County, offers a lot of ice fishing opportunities, and each year we try to make at least one trip up there," says Dave. "We fish the bay for perch, bluegills, and smelt, and the stream mouths for steelhead or smelt. A trip to Erie is usually my Valentine's Day present to my wife, Hilda."

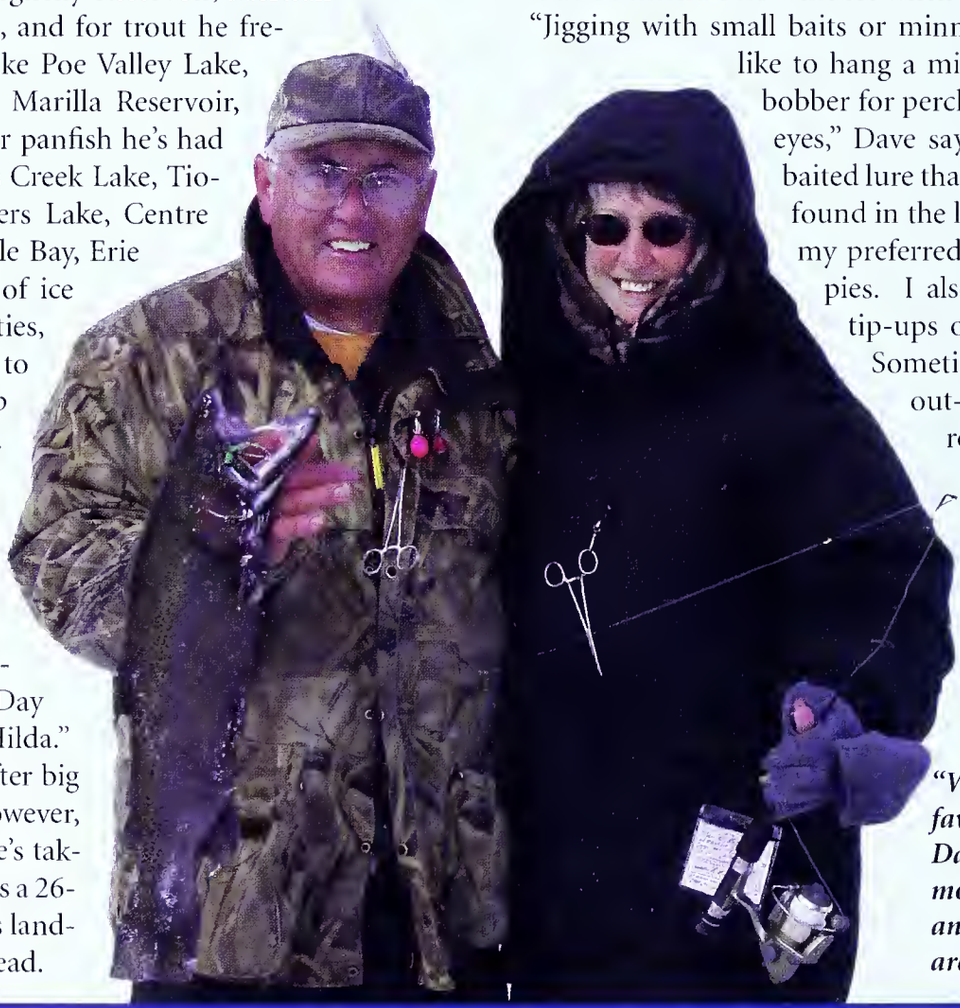
Dave doesn't go after big fish very often. However, one really nice fish he's taken through the ice was a 26-inch walleye, and he's landed a few larger steelhead.

Dave says that the most basic rule of when to ice fish is that early and late safe ice is generally the best. "On a daily basis, daylight and dusk are also the best times for catching most species," he says. "Walleyes and crappies are tied to this daily cycle. The first and last half-hours of the day are often more productive than the rest of the day. Crappies will bite after dark, but I have never done well on any other species after dark. Bright days are generally much less productive than cloudy ones. Fish tend to be deeper after a few days of bright, sunny weather. When fishing in mid-winter, I prefer days with heavy cloud cover and a light snow falling."

Dave has specific ideas on tackle and gear. "An ultralight 30-inch spinning rod with 2- to 6-pound-test line tipped with a teardrop jig or similar lightweight ice lure baited with several grubs will catch most of the panfish that I target," he says. "A spring bobber or a very small conventional bobber is also very helpful when the fish are fussy. Add an ice auger and a scoop for clearing the hole and you will have everything you need to be successful for panfish."

When he's after bigger fish, Dave uses tip-ups or a heavier jigging rod-and-reel outfit. The tip-ups he favors are the magnetic variety that resist freezing. He has a variety of different kinds of tip-ups, and he uses homemade ones that don't extend below the ice when targeting trout.

"Jigging with small baits or minnows is my staple. I like to hang a minnow under a small bobber for perch, crappies, and walleyes," Dave says. "Jigging a small, baited lure that resembles minnows found in the lake you are fishing is my preferred technique for crappies. I also like to keep a few tip-ups out to act as 'scouts.' Sometimes the tip-ups out-produce the jigging rods, especially when I'm after perch or larger fish. During those conditions, I put out several tip-ups."



Dave Putnam and his wife, Hilda. "Walleyes are my favorite quarry," says Dave Putnam, "but I most often target perch and crappies. Trout are also a favorite."

Dave says that moving around is also an effective basic strategy. Sometimes a move of a few hundred yards can make a huge difference in your success, he says.

"My best advice on tackle and gear is to keep things simple," Dave says. "Most experienced ice anglers will tell you that a person with one jigging rod can outfish a person with five rods.

"But do I follow that advice? No. I take enough gear to outfit at least a half-dozen anglers, a grill, a tent, and enough food to last a week. I have more money wrapped up in ice-fishing equipment than some anglers have in their bass boats, and I hate to leave any of it home. Someday I'll take my own advice!"

"I also feel naked without my depth-sounder," Dave admits. "I have used quite a few and all are helpful. There are several made specifically for ice fishing. I prefer flashers. It is amazing what you can learn with one. First, they are highly sensitive. You can 'see' your bait and the smallest snap swivels or sinkers. When a fish approaches, you can tell how aggressive it is. During the winter, the fish aren't often aggressive. Often, many will check out your offering without taking it. You can then test whether the fish wants bait or a lure that's moving or still, or try various jigging motions while watching how the fish reacts."



photos-courtesy of Dave Putnam

"Moving around is an effective basic ice-fishing strategy. Sometimes a move of a few hundred yards can make a huge difference in your success," says Dave Putnam.

Dave says that the most common example of this ploy is to raise the lure or bait as the fish approaches. If the fish follows it more than a few feet, that signals that the fish is interested and will likely bite. If the fish doesn't follow, Dave says you can try different jigging motions to attract it. If that doesn't work, he says, change baits. If that doesn't work, either, "Fire up the grill," Dave quips.

"Lugging all my gear around isn't easy," Dave says. "My tent is designed to be used as a sled and I often load it up. If I don't take my tent, I like a plastic toboggan, and in deep snow, I use a pack basket."

Dave offers great ideas on choosing ice-fishing locations. "Before I go to a lake, I try to get information from tackle shops in the area or from others who I know have fished the area," he says. "Some tackle shops are much better at giving advice than others. You will have to learn this from other anglers or from your own experience. I am much more likely to go back when I get good advice. Some of these tackle shops have web sites or offer regular reports on Internet forums," Dave says.

In recent years, Internet sites have proliferated where you can get information and correspond with regulars from nearly any lake. "Remember that while the regulars will give you pretty good generic information, we don't always tell you exactly where we have been doing the very best," he says. "Spend some time on one of these web sites and meet some of the regulars on the ice, and you will gather a wealth of information," Dave says.

When he arrives at a lake, even one that he's fished the previous day, he uses a spotting scope to check out anglers and see how they are doing. If things are slow, Dave travels to another access point to see if he can locate a hotspot. Often if things are slow in one area, they are often slow in others, he says, but this isn't always the case, and there may be other factors such as depth, current, or cover that vary from one area to another.

Dave sees a lot of ice anglers making the same ice-fishing errors. "The most common error is to go out with everything you own (as I do), put out five tip-ups, set up your tent and grill, and not move for the rest of the day," he says. "If you hit it right, you will be OK, but often the most successful anglers stay mobile. I try to locate a productive site before putting down too many roots," Dave says.

"Another error is failing to keep your fishing rod above the ice," Dave says. "Each year, I see a few rods standing vertical in the ice hole just before making the final plunge. One winter while fishing on Sayers Lake, the big perch were hitting like mad and I had to run back to the truck for a second rod. The truck was only a hundred or so yards away, so I left my favorite spinning rod with Josh Wilt, a young angler who I was introducing to the sport. My parting words were "Josh, you can use my spinning rod. It is my favorite; don't let it go down the hole!'"

"When I returned, Josh was pretty upset, and the pole was gone. He had caught a nice perch with it and had set them both on the ice. Then he had turned to his own rod,

and when he landed the second fish, he turned back and saw mine slipping down the hole. The fish had flopped back into the hole and took the rod with it."

Dave says that experienced ice anglers prepare diligently for their comfort in cold weather. "I have down bib overalls that are very comfortable in a wide range of temperatures," he says. "I also have a portable shelter and a propane heater that's usually reserved for Hilda. I am rarely uncomfortable on the ice. Prospective ice anglers should know that there are some very nice days on the ice with mild temperatures, but preparing for cold weather is essential for enjoying the sport."

Dave says he wears felt pac boots. He has expensive boots with leather uppers and inexpensive rubber felt pac boots. He prefers the rubber ones when the ice is slushy because the leather ones tend to wet through.

Dave uses a hat, most often a ballcap, to keep the sun out of his eyes. To keep his head and ears warm he uses the hood on his coat. "A good hood is nearly as effective as a tent in keeping you warm on a windy day on the ice," he says. "I usually wear military style leather gloves with a felt liner. I usually wear them only while hauling my gear around, and I most often fish without gloves or I use fingerless wool gloves."

Dave says that many anglers prefer ice fishing as a group sport, both for camaraderie and safety. "Most ice anglers are gregarious and will take time to show you their catches and share a few secrets. Most ice anglers are happy to help you get started."





photos-courtesy of Dave Putnam

Dave Putnam doesn't specifically go after big fish very often. However, one really nice fish he's taken through the ice was a 26-inch walleye, and he's landed a few steelhead larger than that, like this one. "An ultralight 30-inch spinning rod with 2- to 6-pound-test line tipped with a teardrop jig or similar lightweight ice lure baited with several grubs will catch most of the panfish that I target," Dave says. This crappie (left) fell for a rig like that.

ICE FISHING and the WATER COLUMN

by Mike Bleech

photos by the author

Many fish tend to be bottom-oriented or cover-oriented, but not nearly so often as many anglers believe. Anglers like to have targets. As anglers become more experienced, they target bottom structure including dropoffs, humps, sunken creek channels in reservoirs, and other areas that can't be seen from above the surface without the aid of electronics.

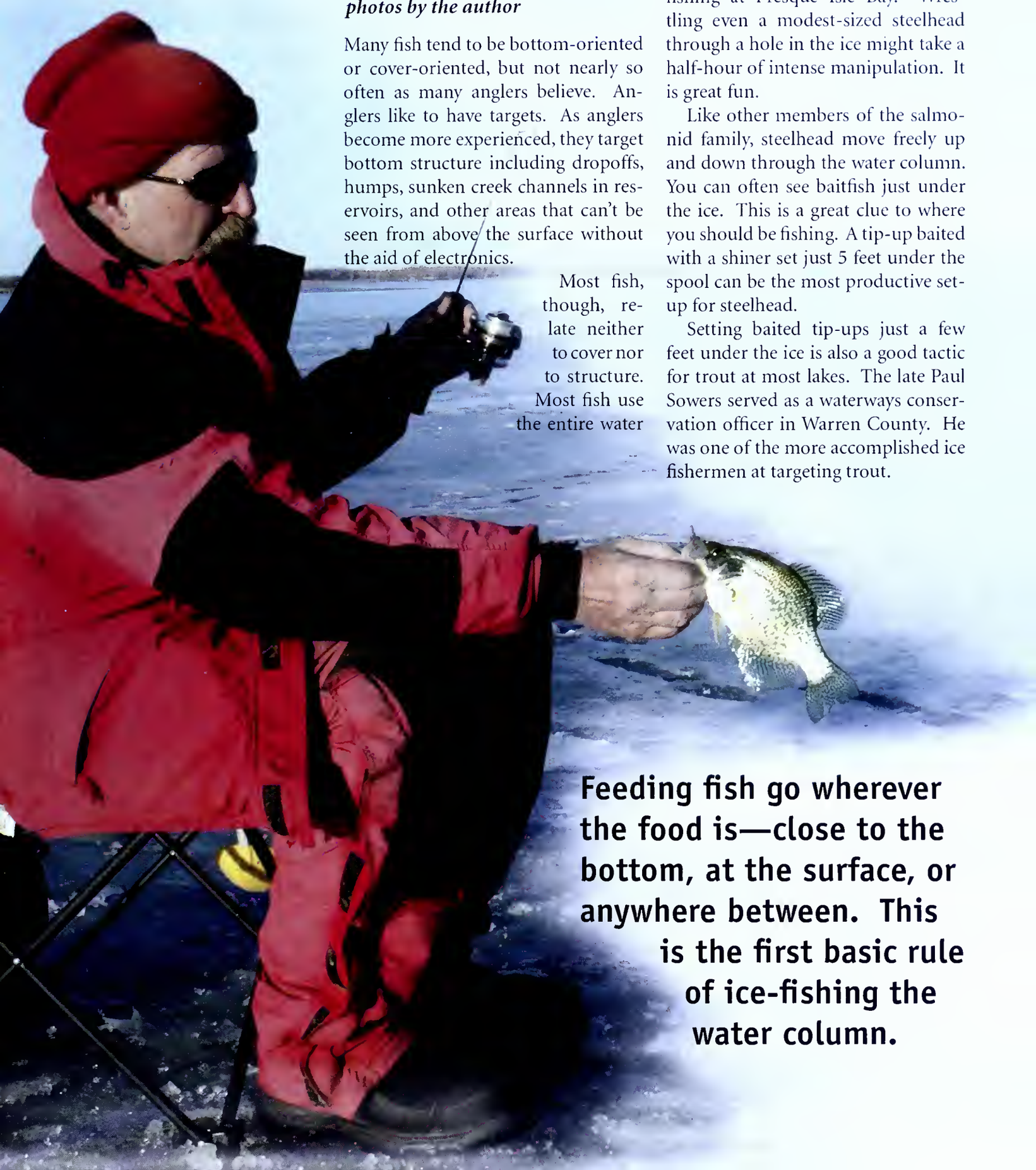
Most fish, though, relate neither to cover nor to structure. Most fish use the entire water column, that is, anywhere from the surface to the bottom.

Feeding fish go wherever the food is—close to the bottom, at the surface, or anywhere between. This is the first basic rule of ice-fishing the water column.

Steelhead are great sport while ice fishing at Presque Isle Bay. Wrestling even a modest-sized steelhead through a hole in the ice might take a half-hour of intense manipulation. It is great fun.

Like other members of the salmonid family, steelhead move freely up and down through the water column. You can often see baitfish just under the ice. This is a great clue to where you should be fishing. A tip-up baited with a shiner set just 5 feet under the spool can be the most productive set-up for steelhead.

Setting baited tip-ups just a few feet under the ice is also a good tactic for trout at most lakes. The late Paul Sowers served as a waterways conservation officer in Warren County. He was one of the more accomplished ice fishermen at targeting trout.



Feeding fish go wherever the food is—close to the bottom, at the surface, or anywhere between. This is the first basic rule of ice-fishing the water column.

On one occasion while ice fishing right under the PA Route 59 bridge in depths of about 60 feet, I asked him about his secret for catching trout. That secret was fishing just under the ice combined with occasionally chumming to catch the attention of wandering trout. A few fish scales sparkling as they slowly fluttered downward were excellent attraction.

The same concept works at our smaller trout lakes. During the first few days after lakes are stocked, catching trout is no big deal. But after some of the trout have been caught, many more remain than most anglers realize. One of the tricks to catching these remaining trout is fishing the entire water column.

Use a jig-up/flutter-down presentation. Lightweight spoons tipped with minnows work well because they flutter down more slowly than do more popular, heavier jigs. Start by jigging just a foot under the ice for a couple of minutes. Then let out enough line for the rig to flutter down 2 or 3 feet and jig for a while at that depth. Continue the process until the rig reaches the bottom. Then after jigging close to the bottom for a while, reverse the process.

You will sometimes discover that one direction or the other is more productive. If that is the case, put the majority of your effort into fishing the rig in that direction.

Yellow perch are often thought of as bottom-oriented, but like most sport fish, they also use the entire water column. Several years ago I was ice fishing at Presque Isle Bay with a group of friends. Fishing was very slow. One of the guys in our group had just bought a new portable sonar. Of course, he was constantly tinkering with his new toy, and it paid off. After noticing signals about 12 feet under the ice, he pulled his jig up from the 22-foot bottom and immediately caught a few fat perch. That action didn't last long, but for the remainder of the day, he kept a close watch on his new sonar, and whenever he spotted signals at mid-depths, he presented his jig at that depth and the new presentation often produced a few quick perch. By the end of the day, he had a dandy mess of perch, all because he observed the entire water column.

Sonar is a great tool for locating fish at mid-depths in the water column. Many of the most successful ice fishermen I've met set their sonar in the hole they're fishing or they drill a hole right next to the hole they're fishing. This way they can make immediate adjustments in their terminal rig depths.



Lightweight spoons tipped with minnows work well on trout because they flutter down more slowly than do more popular, heavier jigs.

Even though there are limitations, sonar is the most helpful tool for exploring the water column. The deeper the water and the deeper the fish, the more likely it is that you can locate them with sonar.

You might have the option of choosing the cone angle when you shop for a sonar unit. I prefer a narrow-angle cone because ice fishermen are limited to fishing straight down. Fish far off to the sides of your hole aren't important. But there's room for disagreement on this. A wider-angled cone will provide more information, but it also adds the element of more potential error in depth readings.

Learn how to read your sonar. Fish detected at the outside of the cone will appear to be deeper than fish at the exact same depth in the middle of the cone. So if fish appear to be suspended at a range of depths, present your baits or lures to the fish that appear to be shallowest on the screen.

Some predator fish attack from below, so in these cases present the baits or lures slightly above the big fish marks.

It's not necessary to be absolutely accurate when presenting baits or lures to suspended fish, but the closer, the better. The smaller the fish you are targeting, the more accurate bait or lure presentation should be.

I prefer the flasher type of sonar over LCD display graphs. Even though many anglers prefer the pretty, virtual pictures provided on LCD screens, flashers provide more instant response to signals. Some excellent sonar units are made specifically for ice fishing. These units generally have floating transducers or some other arrangement that facilitates their use while ice fishing.

Feeding is one major reason why fish suspend in the water column. However, light penetration can nudge fish to different depths. On bright, sunny days during the open-water season, experienced anglers might anticipate that fish will be slightly deeper, variable by the water color. But the world is dark under the ice, so light might attract fish.

Late in the ice-fishing season, crappie action often gets hot right under the ice.

Ice reduces light penetration significantly. But an inch of snow on the ice will reduce light penetration by more than the reduction created by several inches of clear ice. This phenomenon might be one of the reasons why ice fishing can be so productive—fish are attracted to the light that passes through the holes we drill.

One of the most effective ice-fishing methods for crappies is fishing at night with a lantern. Use lures with flash and colors that reflect a lot of light.

Finding suspended fish in deep water can be like looking for that needle in a haystack. I don't like to suggest that anglers spend a lot of money on gear. But for fishing the entire water column, you should seriously consider purchasing a sonar specifically for ice fishing. With this "eye" under the water, you can fish the entire water column much more efficiently.

by Jennifer Bilott



photo: Walt Dietz

ICE FISHING *for the First Time*

"So let me get this straight. You want me to get out of my warm bed at 5 a.m., dress in layers, go to a frozen lake covered in 6 inches of fresh snow, chop a hole in the ice, and fish all day?" That was my initial reaction to my future husband's suggestion for one of our first dates.

I was well aware that this sport existed. I had heard my dad talk about it. Now, I'm usually game for just about anything new, but this was the first Saturday morning in three months I didn't have to get up at 4 a.m. and go hunting. I was looking forward to some much-needed rest. So in an effort to change what I thought was surely to be an agonizing experience, I tried to cast some negative thoughts on the situation.

"Don't you need special rods to fish through the ice?" I asked. He had them. "Don't you need something to cut a hole in the ice?" I asked. He had

it. "Don't you need—..." I didn't even finish my question, but he had it all. Reluctantly I agreed. I was going ice fishing for the first time.

At 5 a.m., my alarm clock screamed, "Get out of bed! It's time to ice fish!" So I dragged myself out of bed. I donned as many layers of clothes as I could—at least I would be warm. My husband-to-be picked me up, and we headed to the lake. The sun hadn't even risen; I couldn't wait for it to set.

When we reached our destination, we loaded our gear into a plastic sled and set out across the frozen plane. I had never stood on a frozen lake before. I never had a reason to do that. So I was apprehensive at first. Some 300 yards later, we stopped. We had finally arrived at "our spot." I'm still not sure how you determine where your spot is through the ice and why "our spot" couldn't have been closer to the truck.

My suitor then pulled a large drilling contraption out of a box. I was informed that it was an auger. Within 5 minutes, he had drilled three holes through the ice and we were fishing. He handed me a short fishing pole rigged with a small white jig. "Just put the jig on the bottom and start jigging," were my instructions.

While I was jigging, he cut another half-dozen holes in the ice and covered them with wooden things with three legs and flags attached. Later, I found out these were tip-ups and they would indicate a strike. What an education I received that day!

The negative attitude I had brought to my first ice-fishing adventure was quickly fading. I am mainly a trout angler, accustomed to fishing in crowds. There wasn't even another person in sight. In fact, with the freshly fallen snow there wasn't even a sound, except for an occasional breeze causing the frozen trees to crack under the weight of the ice. I noticed that the lake and surroundings were beautiful.

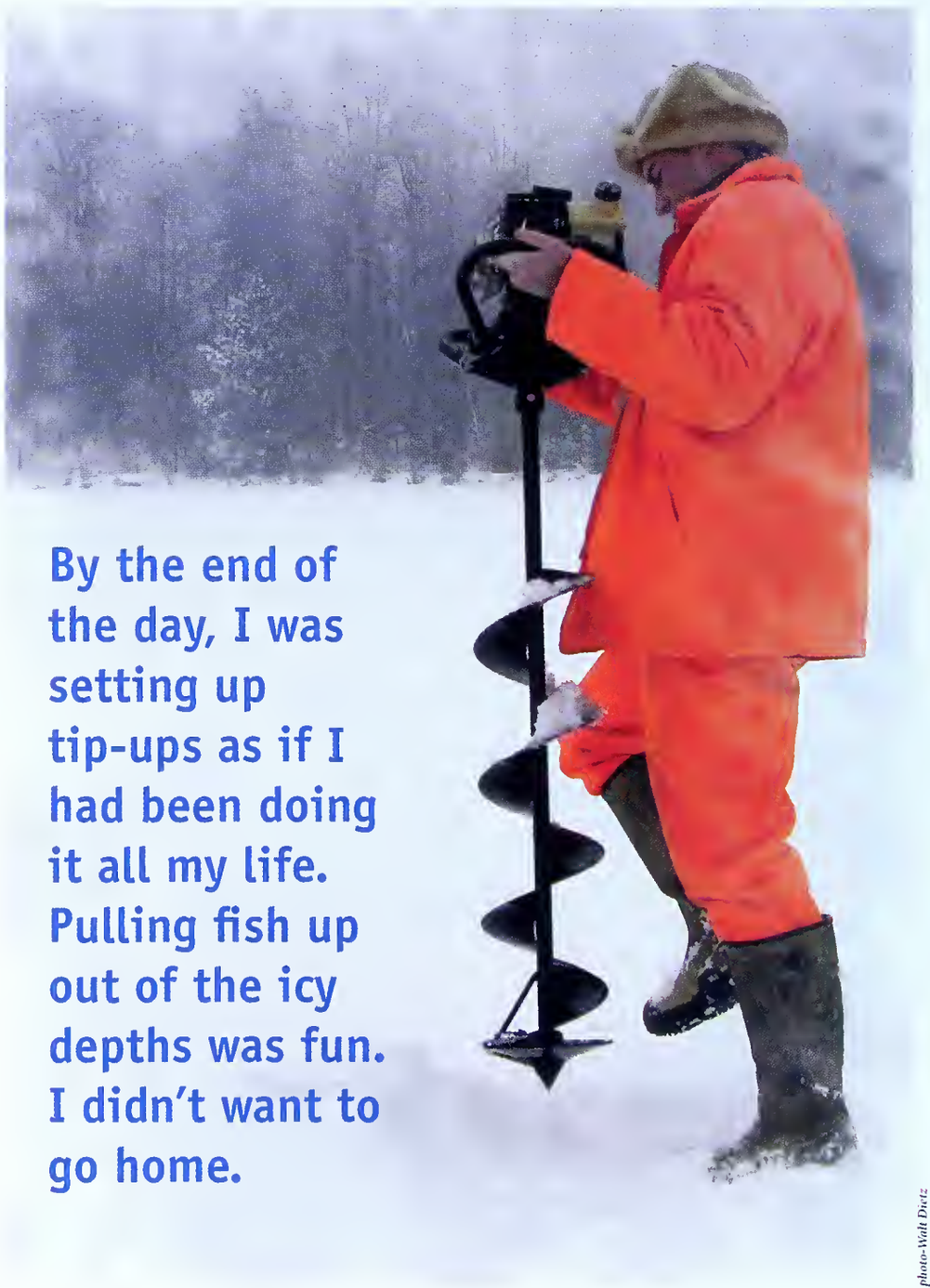
I shattered the quiet when I instinctively yelled, "Fish on!" My first fish was a 13-inch yellow perch. Then I caught another, and another, and another, and another, and before I knew it, I had two dozen jumbo perch lying on the ice. Striking to me were the fish's markings. Their colors seemed to be more brilliant than those of fish caught in the warmer months. Maybe it was my imagination.

Either way, I was starting to love my new-found sport. By the end of the day, I was setting up tip-ups as if I had been doing it all my life. Pulling fish up out of the icy depths was fun. I didn't want to go home.

Ice fishing is a wonderful sport, and you don't have to be a youngster to learn.

The Learning Center

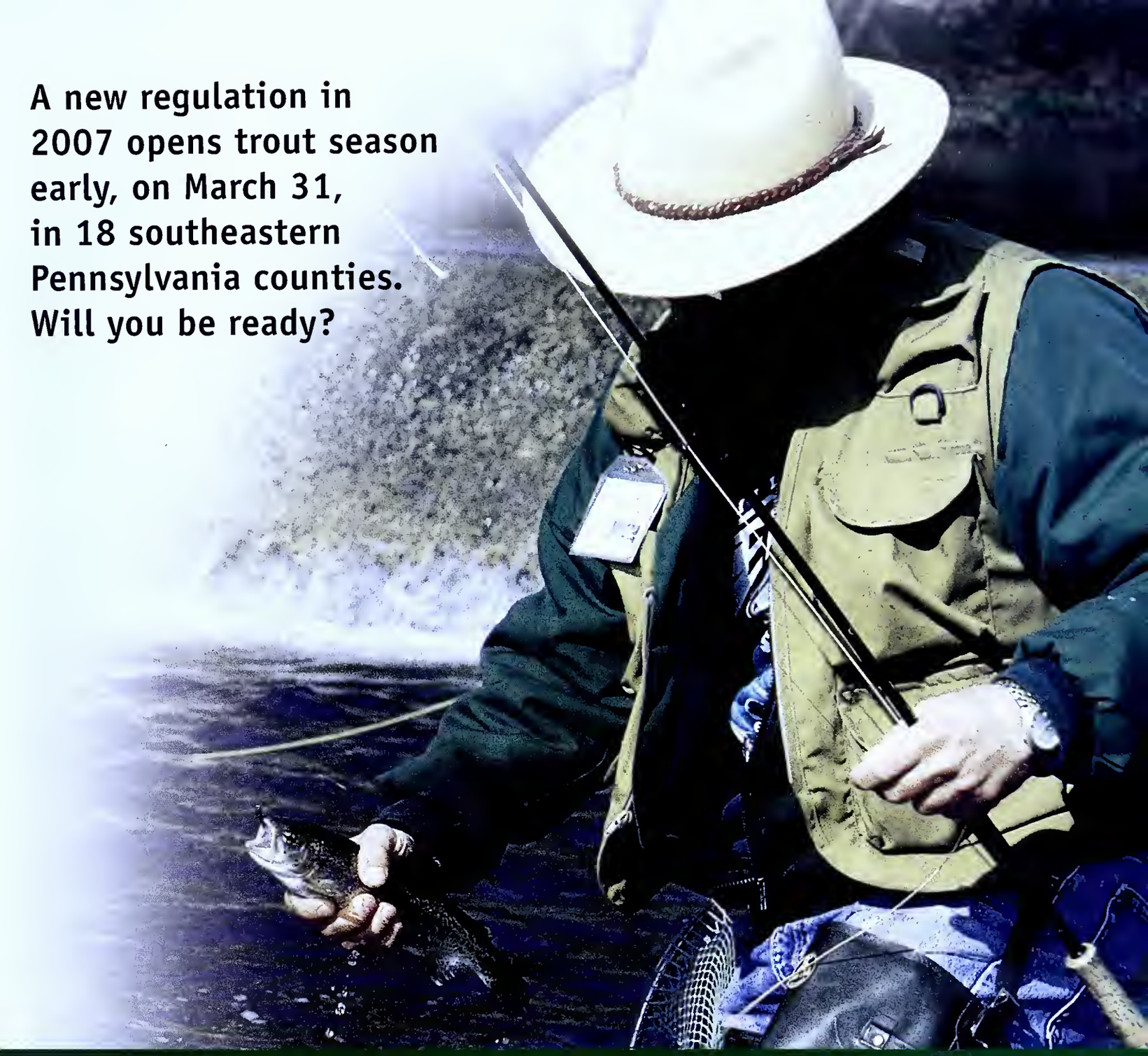
Visit the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**, and check out its online "Learning Center." On the left side of the web site's main page, hold your cursor over "Learning Center," and in that drop-down menu, click on "Fishing Fundamentals." On those pages you will find a wealth of information on fishing rudiments. Scroll to the bottom of that page for details on ice fishing.



By the end of the day, I was setting up tip-ups as if I had been doing it all my life. Pulling fish up out of the icy depths was fun. I didn't want to go home.

photo-Walt Dietz

A new regulation in 2007 opens trout season early, on March 31, in 18 southeastern Pennsylvania counties. Will you be ready?



Prepare for Southeastern PA's Early Trout Opener

by Vic Attardo

photos by the author

This year it's going to get hot early in southeastern Pennsylvania. With trout season opening on March 31 in 18 plus counties, anglers will have the chance to take on stocked waters weeks before the former traditional start in mid-April. The change means that waters Mother Nature had ready for trouting in the past will now be legally ready for those wanting to take advantage of the new regulations.

Southeastern streams are subject to early warming, which should make them receptive to stocking while seasonal temperatures should help with later plantings as the fish are added to cool water. In addition, the earlier season opener will, in limited cases, give anglers the chance to fish over fly hatches, such as the Grannom and possibly the Early Black Stonefly, which were gone before the season started in its previous guise.

Top prospects

Many southeastern streams will be early viable targets this year, and my favorites include a mix of urban and subrural (combining suburban and rural) waters. A cross section includes Philadelphia and Montgomery counties' Wissahickon Creek; Montgomery's Perkiomen, Unami, and Skippack creeks; Northampton's Bushkill Creek; and Schuylkill County's Little Schuylkill River. For the most part, these are low-gradient streams, which means that they don't tumble from great heights nor present a cascade of steep riffles and plunge pools. It means that many of these streams have short, serene riffles, short and varied runs, and often long and deep pools—some over your head.

For the most part, the streams are also freestoners—their flows come from rainfall and runoff. However, underground springs are common, and they provide additional water. Some streams in the region, particularly Bushkill Creek, are limestoners in large sections and get most of their flows directly from the underground aquifer.

The major recipient of many of these streams is the Delaware River. Some must first flow into the Lehigh or Schuylkill rivers, but at least half of the newly regulated trout waters end up in the Delaware River. Another sizable number of streams under the new March 31 opening find their way into the Susquehanna River either directly or by routes into the Juniata River and other warmwater streams. These watersheds run the gamut of highly fertile waters with significant hatches and aquatic life to waters with sparse hatches and more limited life. Anglers will have to decide which of these waters will "turn on" early and which will require a more tactical approach.

Wissahickon Creek

In Philadelphia, Wissahickon Creek ironically does not feel like an urban stream. Surrounded by the deep gullies and rock walls of Fairmount Park, Wissahickon Creek is a trout-filled oasis. Its short riffles, long, meandering curves and runs, and deep pools are a southeastern anomaly. It still manages to entertain hundreds of anglers each day early in the season.

The upper part of Wissahickon Creek flows through the flatter grasslands of Montgomery County and Fort Washington State Park. But as the stream plunges into Philadelphia, it's all that's described above. You'd never know you were there unless you were there.

Access is excellent along the 3 Montgomery County miles and 6 Philadelphia miles, but parking has become problematic in the Philadelphia section around Chestnut Hill.

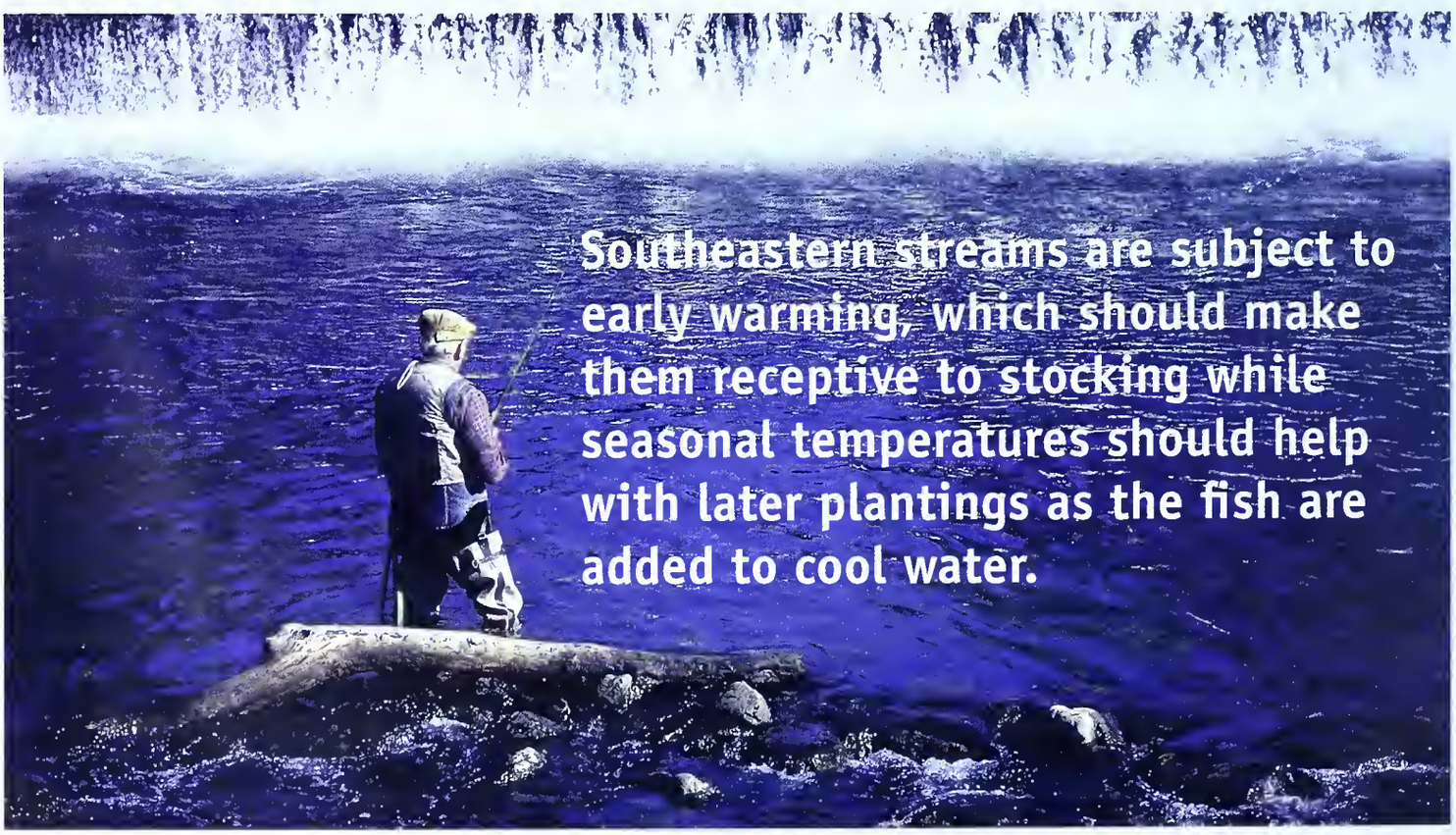
In Montgomery County, there's a trail through the state park that can take you as far as your feet will carry. Designated parking is available on West Valley Green Road and West Mill Road off Bethlehem Pike.

In Philadelphia, Germantown Avenue lies on the east, and Ridge Pike/Henry Avenue is on the west of Wissahickon Creek. Bells Mills Creek crosses the stream and there are parking lots around the bridge.

Bring bait, spinners, and minnow lures to fish this stream. When the crowds thin, dredging Woolly Buggers is a hot ticket.

Schuylkill River tribs

Unami Creek flows into Perkiomen Creek, as does Skippack Creek, farther south. The Perkiomen then flows into



the Schuylkill River, which flows into the Delaware. But that's where the similarities of these three fine stocked streams end.

The upper Perkiomen Creek has a Class A wild trout population, while the Skippack has none and the Unami, possibly a few. The streams also vary in width and temperament.

The width of the stocked section of Perkiomen Creek, from Palm through East Greenville, goes from thin to fat, and its pools transcend from minuscule to magnanimous. Bank fishing is highly popular in the area along Water Street, but anglers can also wade and sweep the runs along PA Route 29.



Bring bait and minnow lures to fish the Unami and bait, nymphs, and lures to fish the Skippack and Perkiomen, plus attractor dry flies.

Unami Creek is studied with large boulders, unlike any other stream in the southeastern area. Many are as big as school buses. Even with short legs, it's possible to hop from one to the other, down long stretches of the stream, without getting wet. Unami Creek is also home to many small dams that result in large, deep pools. It's very "fishy" water.

Skippack Creek flows through Evansburg State Park, and its earthy bottom is often smooth and slick. The stream is also uniform in width and structure from east to west. It doesn't have the boulders of Unami Creek, nor the number of dams as Perkiomen Creek, but it has some fine bridge pools and flat riffles that are easy to wade.

Parking for Perkiomen Creek is off PA Route 29; for Unami Creek, off Swamp Creek Road east of PA Route 63 in Marlborough Township; and for Skippack Creek, off Skippack Pike, Germantown Avenue, and Ridge Pike, among other spots.

Bring bait and minnow lures to fish the Unami and bait, nymphs, and lures to fish the Skippack and Perkiomen, plus attractor dry flies.

Bushkill Creek

Subrural and industrial, Bushkill Creek has taken hits from a number of raging floods in recent years, but this stream keeps on giving. John Hoover, of the Riegelsville area, is a regular on Bushkill Creek, and he reports having one of his best outings on the stream last fall, including catching fat rainbows and browns. He's looking forward to the new season this year.

For its southeast location, Bushkill Creek steps down quickly, and a dam or two produce some sizable plunge pools. But most of the action is in Bushkill Creek's substantial runs that are assisted by the underground aquifer around Stockertown. It's still a pretty and productive stream as it enters the limestone flooring of Tatamy. When it gets into industrial row in Easton, it's still productive.

Access to the upper section is in Jacobsburg State Park. Farther along, Bushkill Drive runs pretty much the length of the stream, with a number of small bridge crossings, municipal parks, and the kindness of industrial neighbors providing more access.

Bushkill Creek can be a challenge to fish, more so than many southeastern streams. The fish get locked into the fertile aquatic life and you literally have to feed them feather and fur replicas, particularly in the 1.1-mile Catch & Release section between the dam at Binney and Smith downstream to the 13th Street Bridge. For the upper section, bring natural and putty baits, spinners, and dark stonefly nymphs for the new early season.

Little Schuylkill River

There's a 1.7-mile Delayed-Harvest, Artificial-Lures-Only section on the Little Schuylkill River that has been open to fishing year-round, providing me with lots of early season fun. Now I can't wait to hit the areas downstream of the Delayed-Harvest area, including the big-water area in Port Clinton that's been stocked only since 2004. Little Black Stoneflies and Blue-Winged Olives may turn out to be an early April hit here.

Anglers accustomed only to the special-regulation section from the PA Route 895 bridge downstream to the T-848 bridge are in for a joyful surprise if they work other sections of the Little Schuylkill River. Directly upstream of the PA Route 895 bridge, the terrain is even woodsier and the stream braids frequently. Downstream of the T-848 bridge, there are turbulent pools, fast runs, and lots of twists and turns. It's all somewhat like the Delayed-Harvest section, only better and even more challenging. SR 2022 at Hecla provides access to the river's upper reaches, and PA Route 895 works close in below Drehersville.

Let the trout fishing heat up quickly for you in southeastern Pennsylvania this year on these streams!

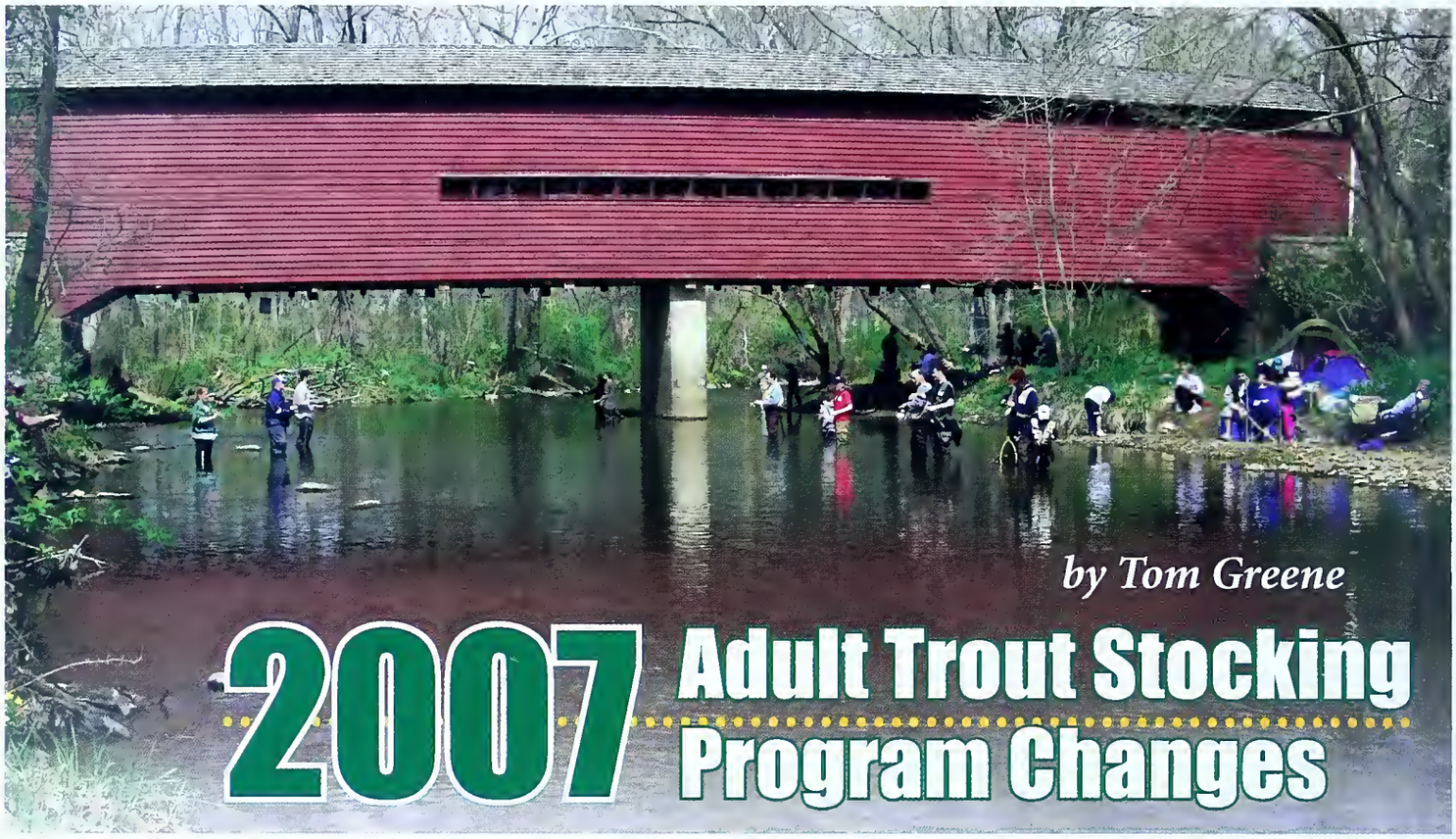


photo-Art Michaels

by Tom Greene

2007 Adult Trout Stocking Program Changes

In 2007, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission will stock some 3.4 million adult trout in Pennsylvania waters open to public angling. This figure includes trout produced at state fish hatcheries, trout obtained from the United States Fish & Wildlife Service as part of a cooperative agreement between the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and trout obtained through a purchase contract with a commercial hatchery.

Beginning with the 2007 season, the Fish & Boat Commission will increase the size of stocked adult trout. Overall, there will be a 30 percent increase in the weight of these fish, and the average length will increase from 10.25 inches to 11 inches.

Currently there is a biomass (weight) limit of 1.9 million pounds of trout that can be produced at Commission hatcheries. This limit was established to comply with the effluent discharge standards placed on Commission hatcheries as permitted by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. For 2007, the total pounds of trout produced at Commission hatcheries will remain the same at about 1.9 million pounds. However, to compensate for the increase in the size of these fish, the number of trout produced will be reduced by about 20 percent to comply with the biomass restriction of 1.9 million pounds of trout produced at our hatcheries. By making the change to raising fewer but larger adult trout, the Commission is responding to the preference expressed by anglers through input at public meetings, correspondence, and on-the-water angler surveys.

Changes for the 2007 season, like past practice, include the addition of new waters, the removal of waters from the stocking program, and the expansion of the stocking program in some waters.

New waters

Big Run, Lawrence County. A 3.6-mile stream section near New Castle will be added to the stocking program. Stocking will extend from the SR 0388 bridge downstream to the SR 0065 bridge. The stream will receive a preseason and an inseason stocking of brown and rainbow trout.

Cold Stream, Centre County. Recent water quality improvements will allow for the resumption of trout stocking on this stream. A 1.0-mile stream section from the power line crossing downstream to the inflow to Cold Stream Dam will be added to the stocking program. This stream section will receive preseason and inseason stockings of brown and rainbow trout.

Cold Stream Dam, Centre County. Water quality improvements will also allow for trout stocking on this 9.9-acre impoundment. The dam will be stocked preseason only with rainbow trout.

Muddy Creek, Lancaster County. A 1.4-mile stream section from 110 yards upstream of the Pleasant Valley Road bridge (T-702) downstream to the SR 0897 bridge in Fivepointville will be added to the trout stocking program. The addition will provide angling opportunities through Brecknock Township Park. This stream section will be stocked preseason with brown and rainbow trout.

Nesquehoning Creek, Carbon County. Because of recent improvements in water quality, trout stocking will begin on a 2.7-mile stream section. Stocking will extend from the bridge on the east end of Industrial Road downstream to 0.2 miles

downstream of the North Mermon Street Bridge in Nesquehoning. The stream will receive a preseason stocking of brook and brown trout and an inseason stocking of brown and rainbow trout.

Ridley Creek, Delaware County. A 1.6-mile stream section extending from the Brookhaven Road Bridge (SR 3003) downstream to the Chestnut Street Bridge (SR 3013) will be added to the trout stocking program. The stream will receive preseason and inseason stockings of brown and rainbow trout.

South Branch Canawacta Creek, Susquehanna County. A 2.5-mile stream section extending from the second bridge on SR 1007 downstream to the mouth will be added to the trout stocking program. This stream section will be stocked preseason only with brown and rainbow trout.

Sweet Arrow Lake, Schuylkill County. This popular 100-acre county-owned lake will be added to the trout stocking program. The lake will be stocked with rainbow trout during the spring inseason and fall stocking periods.

Upper Ice Dam, Luzerne County. This 40-acre lake will be added to the stocking program and will be stocked fall only with brook and brown trout.

Early warning waters

Donegal Creek, Lancaster County. A 2.4-mile stream section from the Donegal Springs Road Bridge (SR 4002) downstream to 0.2 miles downstream of the SR 0772 bridge will be removed from the stocking program because of an increase in landowner posting.

Middle Creek, Snyder County. The 2.4-mile stream section from the outflow of Faylor Lake downstream to the SR 4007 bridge will be removed from the stocking program because of an increase in landowner posting.

North Fork Sixmile Run, Warren County. A 2.0-mile stream section from the headwaters downstream to the mouth will be removed from the trout stocking program because the access road to the stream was closed and because of landowner posting.

Repine Run, Indiana County. The 1.7-mile stream section from the headwaters downstream to the mouth will be removed from the stocking program because of an increase in landowner posting and because of problems associated with low stream flows during the spring.

Rock Run, Berks and Lancaster counties. A 3.4-mile stream section from a farm lane crossing off Bowmansville Road (SR 3026) downstream to the mouth will be removed from the stocking program because of an increase in landowner posting.

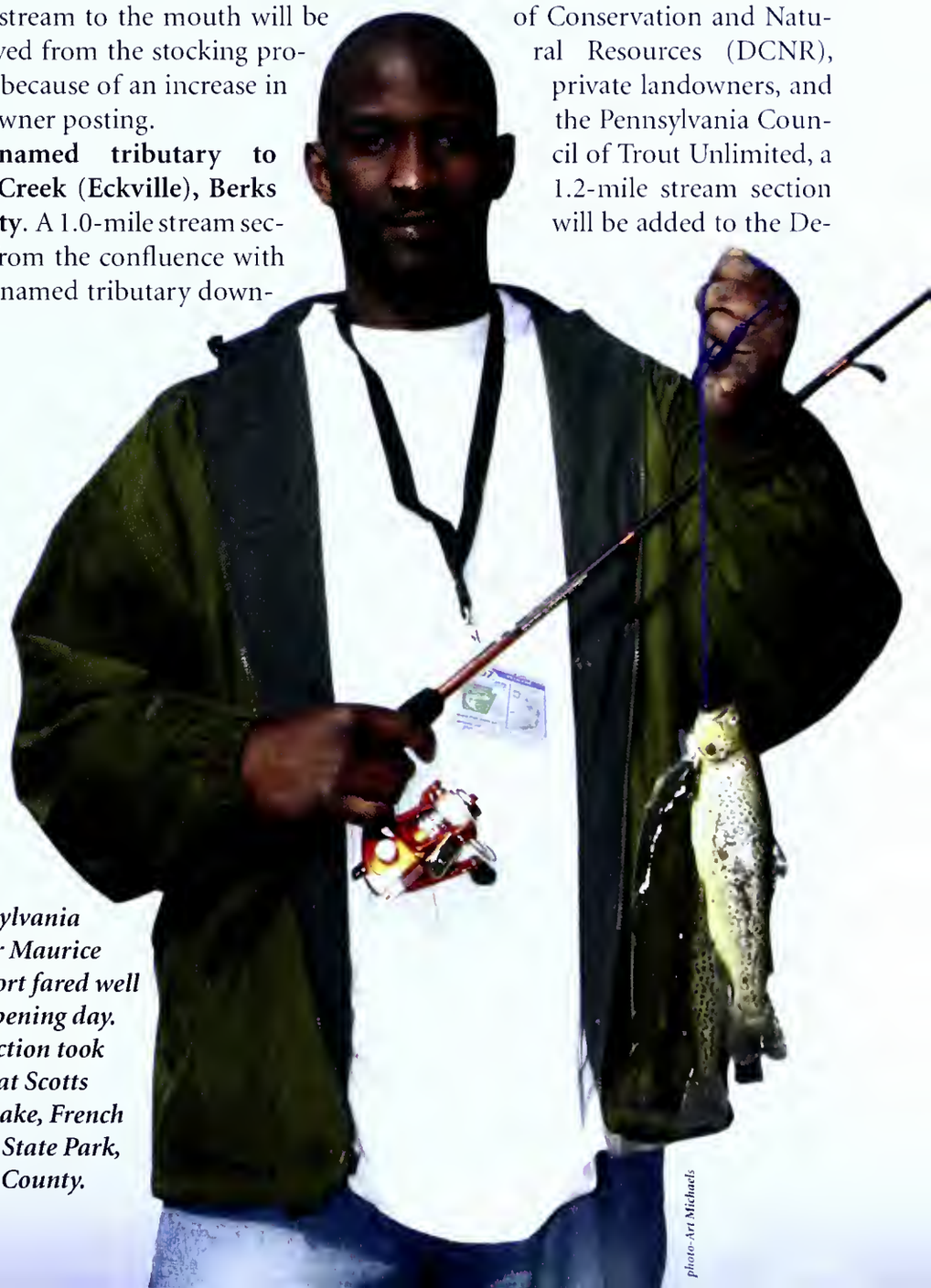
Shearers Creek, Lancaster County. The 2.7-mile stream section from the power line near the county line downstream to the mouth will be removed from the stocking program because of an increase in landowner posting.

Unnamed tributary to Pine Creek (Eckville), Berks County. A 1.0-mile stream section from the confluence with an unnamed tributary downstream to the mouth will be removed from the stocking program because of access limitations and movement of stocked trout from the stream as confirmed by preseason electrofishing in 2006.

West Branch Octoraro Creek, Lancaster County. The 1.9-mile stream section from the confluence of Meetinghouse Creek and Nickel Mines Run downstream to Mount Pleasant Road (T-367) was removed from the stocking program before the 2006 inseason stocking had occurred because of an increase in landowner posting.

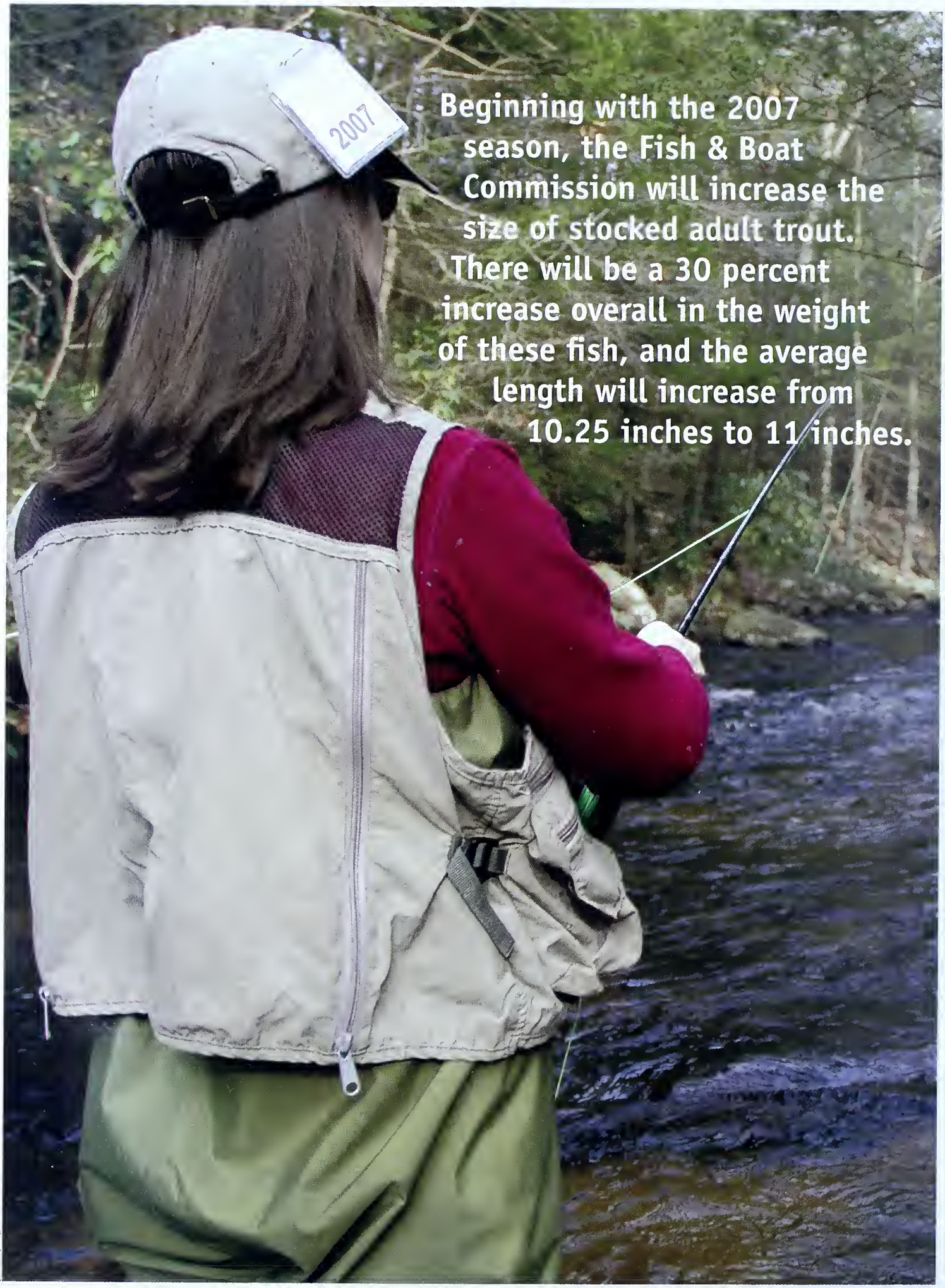
New Delayed-Harvest areas

Pine Creek, Lycoming County. In cooperation with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), private landowners, and the Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited, a 1.2-mile stream section will be added to the De-



Pennsylvania angler Maurice Comfort fared well last opening day. The action took place at Scotts Run Lake, French Creek State Park, Berks County.

photo-Art Michaels



Beginning with the 2007 season, the Fish & Boat Commission will increase the size of stocked adult trout. There will be a 30 percent increase overall in the weight of these fish, and the average length will increase from 10.25 inches to 11 inches.

photo-Spring Gearhart

layed-Harvest, Artificial-Lures-Only (DHALO) program in 2007. The area will extend from the confluence of Slate Run downstream to 0.1-mile upstream of the confluence with Naval Run. This area will receive stockings of brown and rainbow trout during the spring and fall.

Pine Creek, Tioga County. In cooperation with DCNR, the Tiadaghton Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and the Tioga County Planning Commission, a 1.1-mile stream section will be added to the DHALO program. This area will extend from the confluence with Darling Run downstream to 0.1-mile downstream of the confluence with Owassee Slide Run. This area will receive stockings of brown and rainbow trout during the spring and fall.

Sandy Lick Creek, Clearfield County. In cooperation with the Allegheny Mountain Chapter of Trout Unlimited and the city of Dubois, a 1.2-mile stream section will be added to the DHALO program in 2007. The area will extend from the confluence with Laborde Branch downstream to 100 meters downstream of the confluence with Reisinger Run. This area will receive stockings of brown and rainbow trout during the spring and fall.

Stocking restoration

Lyman Lake, Potter County. This 40-acre lake was removed from the stocking program during the spring of 2001 because of safety concerns that required a total drawdown of the impoundment to allow for major renovations to the dam's structure. After lake water levels have been restored, trout stocking is scheduled to resume for the 2007 season.

Opossum Creek Lake, Cumberland County. Following a period to allow the shoreline to stabilize from the partial lake drawdown, trout stocking will be restored during the spring of 2007.

Expansions

Changes in classification and/or stocking limit extensions have led to an increase in the stocking program on the following waters: Lehigh Canal, Northampton County; Little Bushkill Creek, Northampton County; Little Schuylkill River, Schuylkill County; and Muddy Creek, Crawford County.



Unami Creek, Montgomery County

photo-Art Michaels

New-Look Trout Stocking Schedule Now Available

Those fishing for information about trout stockings at nearby waters now have just one cast to make. Thanks to a new look to the stocking schedule, Pennsylvania anglers can quickly get details from easy-to-read tables that show an entire year's worth of stockings at one time.

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission will post the 2007 stocking schedule on its web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**. In 2007, the Commission is again providing information on the exact day when stockings are taking place. For many years, those dates were not published. For stockings before the new opening day in 18 southeastern counties and the April trout season opener, an estimated time and meeting location for the stocking truck are provided for those who want to assist with a stocking or simply observe.

For these reasons, the list is now too long to print in the magazine.

To make the list simple to use, stocking information is sorted by county. In each county, stream sections and lakes to be stocked are listed alphabetically, and the entire year's worth of trout-stocking dates are shown for each. Separate lists were developed previously for stockings that took place before the start of the season and those that took place later in spring, fall, and winter. Also included on the list are descriptions of the stream section to be stocked and the type of trout released.

Stockings will start March 1 and as in previous years, they will be spread throughout the spring, fall, and winter.



Flies for Opening Day

by Linda Steiner



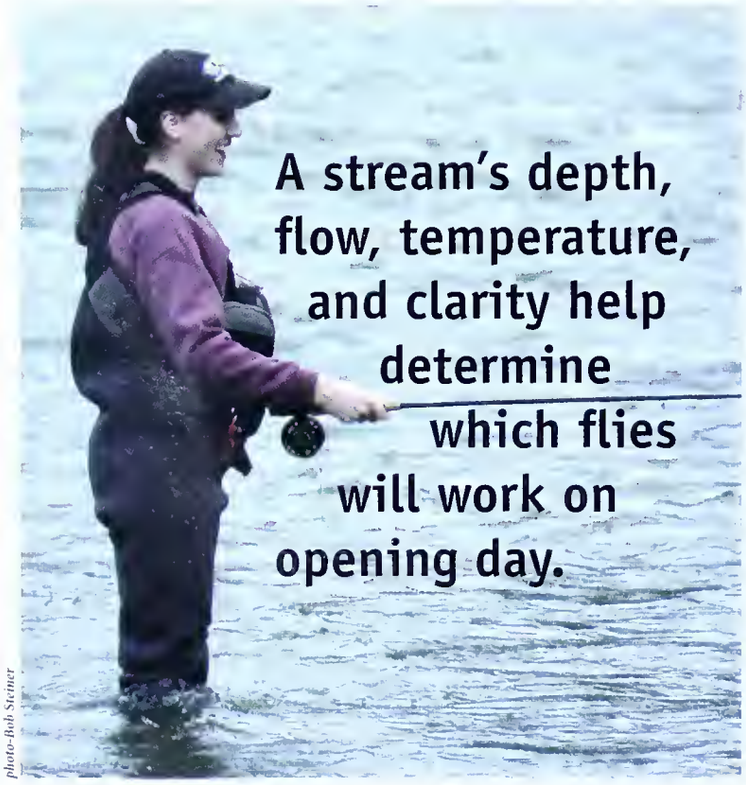
Streamers and subsurface patterns

photo-Linda Steiner

Bait and lures are very effective at taking trout on the April season starter and are fun ways to fish. But what about the fly angler who wants to enjoy opening day? How can fly anglers not only catch fish, but also coexist peaceably on the stream with fellow trout enthusiasts?

As at other times of the year, fly-fishing success depends on choosing and effectively using the right flies. This means correctly interpreting the stream's physical condition, the trout's feeding style, and the activity of aquatic insects and other small water life.

The stream's depth, flow, temperature, and clarity help determine which flies will work on opening day. If snowmelt has been early or if the winter has been mostly dry, and if early spring has been sunny, not rainy, streams may already be warm. They may also have low flows and be window-glass clear. Fly anglers then must use tactics they'd normally reserve for summer—fishing small flies on wispy tippets and keeping a low profile.



A stream's depth, flow, temperature, and clarity help determine which flies will work on opening day.

photo-Bob Steiner

But that's not usually the case on opening day. More often, snowmelt and icy rains have streams close to bankfull, cold, and slightly turbid. When water temperatures are in the high 30s or the 40s, sluggish trout won't feed as readily as they would when stream temperatures reach the 50s. Fly anglers should try fishing slowly and deeply to appeal to the trout's feeding-and-following instincts for that early time of year.

The most effective flies for opening day will be underwater offerings instead of topwater choices. Anglers can use flies a size bigger and tippets a little heavier than those necessary in late spring and summer. They might also try fishing two flies at once, pairing a large fly with a smaller one tied as a "dropper," on a short piece of monofilament. Tie the dropper from a leader knot so that it runs ahead of the main fly, or tie it at the bend of the main fly's hook so that it trails behind the first fly.

Streamers

Streamers come into their own on opening day, mimicking the live and salted minnows and the bright-bladed lures of spin-fishermen. Streamers can be tied weighted or unweighted. If you use an unweighted streamer, add splitshot to the line as needed to get the fly down to the trout's level, or tie your streamer with wraps of lead. Proven streamers include the Muddler Minnow, to give trout something they can really chew on; the Hair-Wing Royal Coachman, whose white calf or deer-tail wing is visible to fish in "off-color" water; and the Blacknose Dace, an in-stream minnow imitation with a "chase-me, I'm bleeding" red tag.

In addition to these traditional reliables, try the sparsely dressed Clouser Minnow and the utilitarian Woolly Bugger. Both are more fly styles than set "recipes," and they can be tied in a variety of colors. The Clouser Minnow has

built-in weight—its "dumbbell eyes"—and it drifts with the hook up, minimizing snagging. Try white and lime-green or white and yellow for extra visibility, or white and black, or the Brook Trout Clouser, with materials mimicking that fish's coloration, for something more lifelike.

For Woolly Bugger opening-day colors, black, olive, brown, white, and yellow are popular. Try Woolly Buggers in sizes big and small. Both will spark strikes according to the trout's mood. For quick-sinking a Woolly Bugger, wrap the weight around the hook under the fly body, or tie on "dumbbell eyes," a metal conehead, or a big beadhead.

Nymphs, wet flies

Nymphs are bottom-dwelling immature forms of mayflies and stoneflies, common in April streams, and they are a trout food staple. To imitate nymphs, choose fly patterns like the Hare's Ear, Fox Squirrel, Pheasant Tail, the impressionistic Casual Dress, or other gray fur nymphs, and the Black Stonefly. These nymphs are usually fished weighted, cast upstream to bump back down along the bottom, and then allowed to "swim up" at the end of the drift. Fish take them both on the dead drift and on the swing.



These early season nymph patterns imitate stonefly and mayfly nymphs.

Traditional wet fly patterns have mostly been replaced by the use of nymph and emerger patterns, but wet flies can still be useful at imitating the hatching or swimming stages of mayflies, caddis, and stoneflies. For opening day, try the Dark Hendrickson, Dark Cahill, or March Brown. Or fish other mid-water-level flies like the Woolly Worm in black, brown, yellow, or peacock herl. Brook trout particularly seem to go for the yellow-lime Green Weenie.

One of the best early season flies for rainbow trout is the Egg Sac, also called a Sucker Spawn or Spawn Sac. The fly's little loops of yarn, usually light yellow, pink, gold, or orange, imitate clusters of fish eggs. Originally a steelheader's fly, the pattern attracts trout in the habit of feeding on the eggs of other trout, as well as those of spring-run suckers. The Glow Bug, a clipped clump of brightly colored yarn fibers, is another steelheader egg sac pattern that works well on April's stocked rainbows.

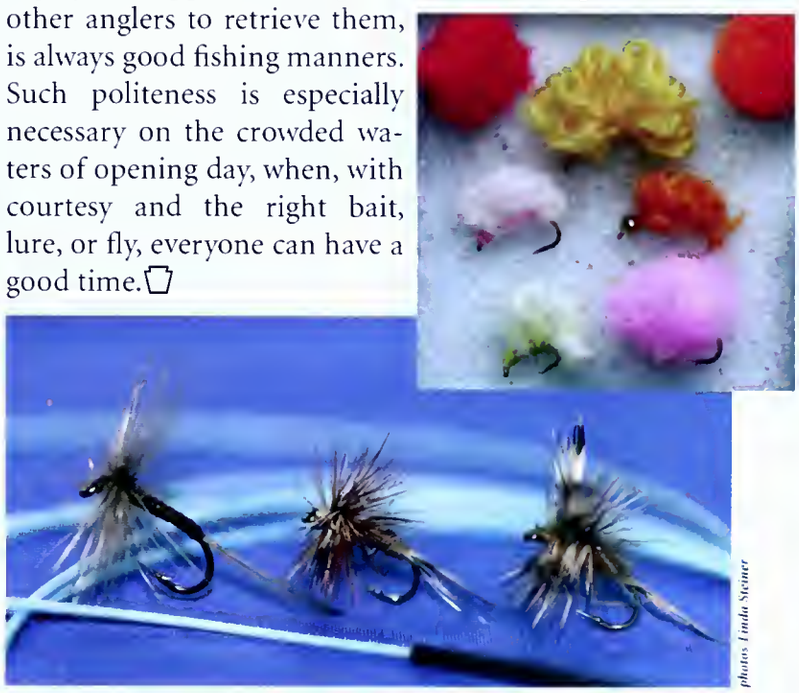
Dry flies

Dry flies on opening day? It can be done, but catching success depends on whether or not stream insects are hatching. A "rule" for choosing which dry flies to use is to start with the darkest-toned flies first and go lighter, to grays, browns, tans, and creams, as the season progresses. To imitate mayflies that hatch in April, try the Quill patterns (Blue, Black, Red, and Gordon), the Blue Dun, the Blue-Winged Olive, and Adams.

The early brown and early black stoneflies and the little black and Grannom caddis flies are even more likely to be on the surface opening day. Use buoyant, durable elk-hair or deer-hair downwing patterns to imitate these flies on spring's quick-water flows. Want an additional tying trick? Add a bright-green tag at the end of the Grannom's dark body to imitate this caddis fly's eggs.

To opening day bait and lure anglers, fly anglers aren't always a welcome sight on already crowded creeks. This partly deserved prejudice comes from some fly-rodders' casting in the traditional long-line, fore-and-aft manner. This practice uses upstream space and requires a wider berth than most opening day anglers can or will provide. Fly anglers can correct this problem by limiting the length of backcasts, keeping them high, and eliminating false casts, if possible. Instead, "lift and flip" the fly upstream without backcasting, or use a roll cast, which always keeps the line in front and in a narrow lane.

Fly anglers can better share opening day streams if they leave the deep, slow-moving holes to the bait and lure anglers. Flies are rarely effective there, anyway. Instead, try plumbing runs, pocket-water, and even riffles, where trout may be feeding actively. Sacrificing fly and tippet to a snag, instead of wading in front of other anglers to retrieve them, is always good fishing manners. Such politeness is especially necessary on the crowded waters of opening day, when, with courtesy and the right bait, lure, or fly, everyone can have a good time.



photos Linda Steiner

Egg sac flies (upper right) and mayfly imitations, including a Red Quill (left) and two Adams-type flies.

Cast Away

Northeast Pennsylvania for Gamefish Through the Ice

by Art Michaels

Northeast Pennsylvania offers some great ice fishing opportunities for gamefish. Commission Area 4 Fisheries Manager Rob Wnuk says, "Some of the best gamefish spots include Lily Lake for trophy northern pike and largemouth bass, Frances Slocum Lake for walleyes, muskies, and largemouth bass, and Cowanesque Reservoir for muskies and largemouth bass."

Commission Area 5 Fisheries Manager Dave Arnold says, "Duck Harbor Pond offers stocked catchable trout, walleyes, and largemouth bass (and some smallmouth bass). Lake Wallenpaupack is a good spot for walleyes, smallmouth bass (and some largemouth bass), striped bass, and trout." Arnold also suggests trying Beltzville Lake for walleyes, trout, striped bass, and purebred and tiger muskies, and Minsi Lake for largemouth bass and, about February, stocked catchable trout.



photo-WCO Dave Kanuski

Lake Wallenpaupack is a productive spot for smallmouth bass and largemouth bass.

On Lily Lake, Wnuk says, anglers should concentrate their efforts near the first point and associated cove east of the Fish & Boat Commission access. This spot is where the trophy pike tend to congregate during midwinter to late winter.

At Frances Slocum Lake, walleyes can be taken in the deeper waters near the dam, and muskies are the target where the lake narrows into a "neck" near the night boat launch, off Carverton Road. Largemouth bass can be taken just about anywhere. In Cowanesque Reservoir, muskies tend to prefer the shallower areas in the upper end of the lake. Largemouth bass can be found anywhere.

Dave Arnold says that in Duck Harbor Pond, fishing anywhere is equally good for all species. In Lake Wallenpaupack, try anywhere for walleyes, smallmouth bass, and trout. Anglers can find good striped bass areas near the Commission, PPL Ledgedale, and PPL Ironwood Point accesses.

"In Beltzville Lake, walleyes and trout can be found anywhere," Arnold says. "Purebred and tiger muskies can be found in the Wild Creek and Pohopoco Creek arms and convergence pool, near the dam, and just west of the swimming beach area." Arnold says that stripers can be located from the Pine Creek juncture down to the dam.

In Minsi Lake, look for largemouth bass and stocked trout anywhere. "About February, anglers should be able to find holdover stocked trout from the previous inseason stocking in 2006, which occurred before the lake winter stocking," Arnold says.

In Lily Lake, stocking maintains the northern pike population. "Stocking rates are high enough to produce a good supply of fish," Wnuk says, "but low enough so that growth rates are high. Largemouth bass are managed with Big Bass regulations."

Stocking also maintains Frances Slocum Lake's walleyes and muskies, and largemouth bass are managed there with Big Bass regulations.

"Hammond Lake is a management success story," says Wnuk. "The lake was originally overrun with stunted carp and it had very few gamefish. The Commission introduced baitfish and predators. The baitfish did very well and provided an excellent forage base. This, in turn, produced excellent crappie growth rates. Predator stockings, including striped bass hybrids and channel catfish, have also done well with the forage base.

"Lake Wallenpaupack is owned by PPL but is open to public fishing," says Arnold, "and all species are managed under statewide regulations. The vastness and productivity of the lake combine to enhance year-round fishing opportunities. The lake is annually stocked with walleyes, striped bass, and brown trout fingerlings."

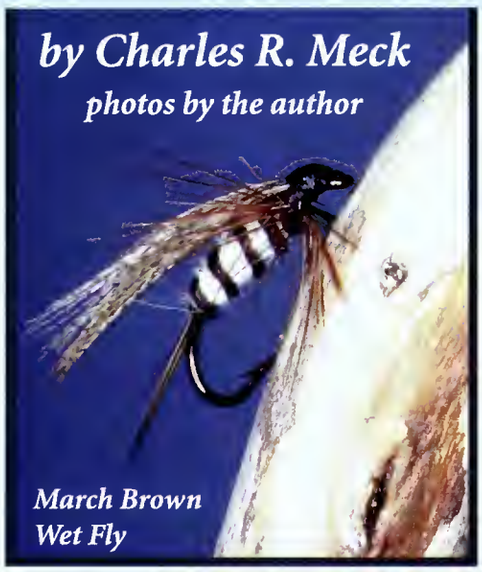
Arnold says that the Commission uses Lake Wallenpaupack as walleye brood water. "Adult walleyes are removed early in spring for hatchery purposes at the Commission's Pleasant Mount State Fish Hatchery," Arnold says. "The Commission returns the adult walleyes to the lake after the process is complete. Later in the year, the Commission stocks some of their progeny, raised at the Pleasant Mount State Fish Hatchery, into Lake Wallenpaupack."

Arnold says that Wallenpaupack's smallmouth bass and largemouth bass are maintained through natural reproduction. The main forage base there is the alewife.

Check ice conditions before venturing out. For state park lakes, check DCNR's Winter Report at **www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/winter/wintera.aspx**.

THE MARCH BROWN WET FLY

by Charles R. Meck
photos by the author



I've used a March Brown wet fly about as long as I've been fly-fishing, and it works as well in the winter as it does in the spring and summer. It works as well today as it did 50 years ago. It's a consistent producer. I've used few other wet-fly patterns than the March Brown—because I didn't need any others.

I am convinced that many of our old standby wet-fly patterns like this one are top producers because they suggest a nymph moving to the surface to emerge. The March Brown is a simple but effective pattern. The cream body's dark-brown ribbing suggests many similarly colored naturals to trout. Pick up some of the rock-clinging nymphs on your favorite stream and look at their abdomens. Many of them have the same color as this wet fly.

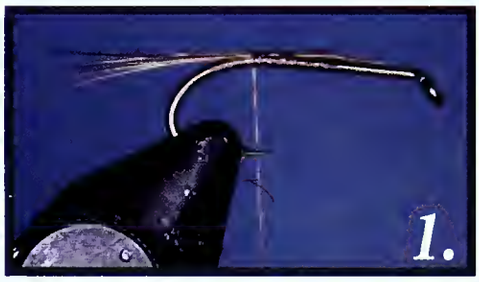
I dislike adding weight to my fly line because casting with the added weight is clumsy and it causes the leader to tangle more easily. So I often add weight when I'm tying the fly. That's one great advantage for fly-tiers: You can add a feature like weight to this fly to make it work even better when you want to fish deeper.

I most often prefer to tie the March Brown in sizes 12 to 16. I prefer fishing sizes 14 and 16 in the winter and size 12 in the spring.

Make certain you take a couple of March Brown wet flies with you if you plan to fish this winter. You can then extol the merits of this fine wet fly.

March Brown Wet Fly

Hook: Size 12, 14, or 16, wet-fly hook.
Thread: Dark brown, 6/0.
Tail: Dark-brown hackle fibers.
Body: Cream rabbit or angora ribbed with dark-brown thread.
Wing: Brown mallard flank feathers.
Hackle: Dark-brown hackle.



1. *Take about four to six long, dark-brown hackle fibers and tie them in as the tail at the bend. The tail fibers should extend past the bend just a bit shorter than the shank length.*



2. *Tie in a 4-inch piece of dark-brown thread at the bend. Dub cream rabbit fur onto waxed tying thread, and wind the dubbed material from the tail up the shank two-thirds of the way to the eye. Taper the body so that it's smaller at the tail and larger near the eye. Leave plenty of room for the hackle and wings that you'll place in front of the body.*



3. *Take the brown thread that you left at the tail and rib the cream body with it four or five times.*



4. *Cut off the excess brown thread and tie in a dark-brown soft hackle with the dull side facing the tail. Make three or four turns around the shank with the hackle, tie off, and cut off the excess.*



5. *For the wing, tie a center piece of a dark-brown mallard flank feather and tie it in just behind the eye.*



6. *Cut off the flank feather's butt section, form the head, whip finish, and apply cement.*

Fishing the March Brown Wet Fly

by Carl Haensel

Fishing in winter and early spring can yield some of the coldest, finger-numbing expeditions of the fly-fishing season. They also can produce amazing results. Trout that are stacked up in a deep pool can respond with amazing vigor in water that's chilling you to the bone.

Better yet, a jumping brown trout on a late-winter day is just what the soul needs after a long fishing hiatus. The March Brown wet fly is one very versatile fly that can make this wintertime magic happen for you.



photo-Justin Torok

You should pick a gray, warming day during late winter for some good brown trout action on wet flies.

Wet flies serve many purposes. They can be fished near the surface, imitating an emerging mayfly. They can be fished deeply, imitating a drifting nymph, and they can be fished actively just about anywhere in between.

You will find that two primary techniques with a weighted wet fly cover your winter fishing options. First, a classic wet-fly swing covers riffles and runs. On the warm days when the guides on your rod are not icing, riffles and runs are the spots where the brown trout in your local trout stream may be playing.

To perform this technique properly, cast across and slightly downstream from where you are located on the stream. Mend the fly line immediately to let your wet fly sink naturally and achieve some depth in the water. As the line tightens, keep your rod tip down and pointed toward the fly. Your fly should swing across almost the entire current. You may want to let it hang in the current for a bit before picking up for another cast. Some anglers like to impart action to a wet fly with minute line strips. If you don't think your fly is getting deep enough, cast slight farther upstream and mend additionally to let your fly sink.

Another method is to use this fly as a trailing fly on a nymph rig. Fishing a two-fly nymph rig in winter is a great idea when the fish are on the bottom of the pool, bored (or frozen) stiff. The March Brown wet fly does a good job fished dead, and it can provoke quick and savage strikes from seemingly lethargic fish when you end the drift and the fly begins to swing. Indeed, this technique allows an angler to use both a dead drift and a swing on the same cast, which is almost always a good idea.

To make this method work, fish your dead drift through a deep run or pool as you would normally. Take care to avoid drag just as much as you usually would. In winter, make your drift as long as possible to place the flies on the bottom with the fish. Don't expect the fish to move very far for a dead-drifted combo. At the end of the drift, let the flies swing up from the bottom through the levels of the current. Your rod should be angled downstream, pointed toward your flies, with the tip held near the surface. As the swing progresses, try a few very short twitches that can be produced by stripping the line. Don't create these twitches with rod movement. Remember that if your rod is pointed downstream and you have to set the hook, you are at a poor angle. To give yourself better odds of hooking a fish, strike with your rod off to the side of the stream. Since it's winter, you might not be in the stream—you might be standing along the bank. This positioning can help your hooking angle and your hook set. Don't strike with your rod back up along the stream channel, since you stand good odds of loosing your fish this way.



photo-Carl Haensel

Wet flies can be fished near the surface, imitating an emerging mayfly, fished deeply, imitating a drifting nymph, or fished actively just about anywhere.

Frances Slocum State Park

by Walt Dietz



photo: Walt Dietz

Anglers are in luck if they are looking for a waterway in northeast Pennsylvania where they can catch just about any kind of fish. Frances Slocum Lake, in Frances Slocum State Park, in northeastern Luzerne County, has most game fish species that you can think of, including bass, panfish, and trout. The park is also a wonderful place for a quiet ride in a canoe, kayak, or rowboat.

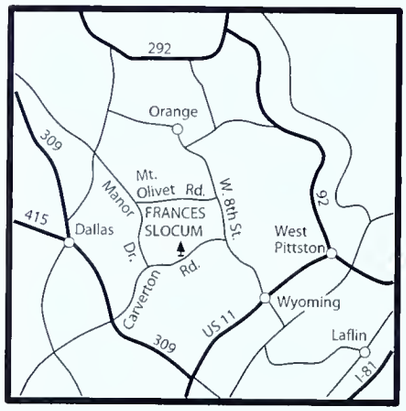
Frances Slocum Lake was part of a flood-control project developed in the late 1960s. It was created by an earth-filled dam across Abraham Creek. The lake is 165 acres and is surrounded by more than 1,000 acres of park area. The park and lake were named after Frances Slocum, a 5-year-old Quaker girl who was abducted by Delaware Indians in 1778.

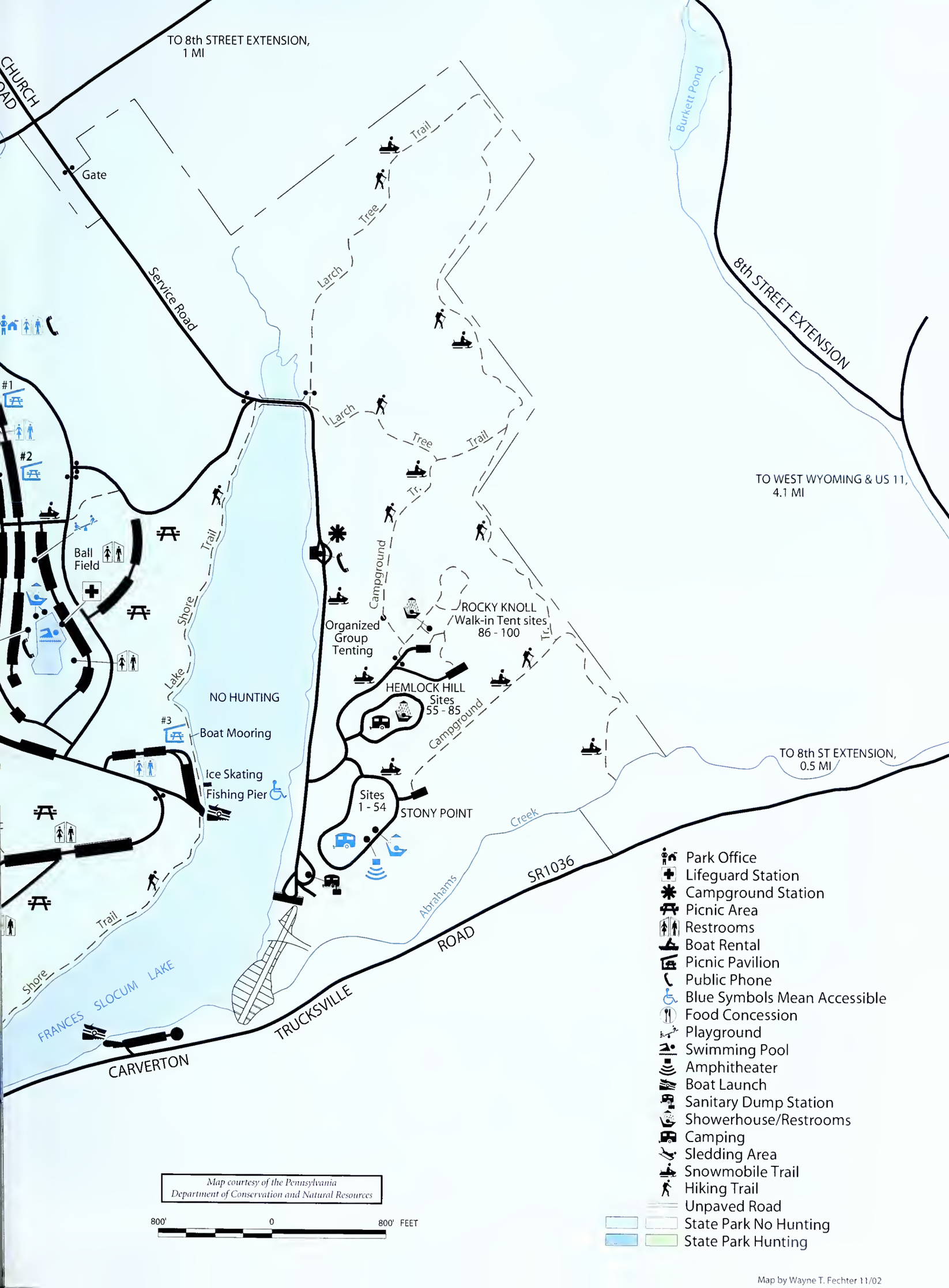
Frances Slocum Lake is unique in two ways: The diversity of its topography and its fish community. It is shaped like a big horseshoe. It has several shallow and mid-depth flats and a few steep breaks that lead into long benches. It averages around 9 feet deep with the deepest spot around 27 feet. There are several small tributaries that enter the lake and a few wetland areas along the shoreline. The shallow areas can spawn a heavy growth of aquatic vegetation, which provides great natural fish habitat. The Commission's Habitat Management Section and the Nanticoke Conservation Club have partnered and installed artificial structures in the lake. Porcupine brush cribs were constructed and sunk along different shoreline areas. These structures provide cover for young fish and spawning adult fish.

The lake's unique shape, diversity in topography, and natural habitat provide some great places for fish to live. Most anglers fish this lake from

(article continued on page 34)

FRANCES SLOCUM STATE PARK




TO 8th STREET EXTENSION,
1 MI
CHURCH
ROAD
Gate
Service Road
Trail
Tree
Larch
Burkett Pond
8th STREET EXTENSION
TO WEST WYOMING & US 11,
4.1 MI
#1
#2
Ball
Field
Trail
Shore
Lake
NO HUNTING
#3
Boat Mooring
Ice Skating
Fishing Pier
Campground
Organized
Group
Tenting
ROCKY KNOLL
/Walk-in Tent sites
86 - 100
HEMLOCK HILL
Sites
55 - 85
Sites
1 - 54
STONY POINT
TO 8th ST EXTENSION,
0.5 MI
Creek
Abrahams
SR1036
ROAD
TRUCKSVILLE
CARVERTON
FRANCES SLOCUM LAKE
Park Office
Lifeguard Station
Campground Station
Picnic Area
Restrooms
Boat Rental
Picnic Pavilion
Public Phone
Blue Symbols Mean Accessible
Food Concession
Playground
Swimming Pool
Amphitheater
Boat Launch
Sanitary Dump Station
Showerhouse/Restrooms
Camping
Sledding Area
Snowmobile Trail
Hiking Trail
Unpaved Road
State Park No Hunting
State Park Hunting
Map courtesy of the Pennsylvania
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
800' 0 800' FEET
Map by Wayne T. Fechter 11/02

the shoreline. Some of the shoreline can be accessed from inside the park boundaries. Anglers can park at one of the parking lots near the two boat mooring areas, each located on the eastern and western legs of the lake. It's an easy walk to the lake shore from those parking areas. There is an accessible fishing pier by one boat mooring area. It is located between Picnic Pavilion Three and the main boat launch. Several artificial habitat structures have been installed just out of casting distance from that pier, which should improve fishing in that area.

Anglers can also hike along the Lake Shore Trail, which follows the inner bend of the "horseshoe." The trail provides good access to the lake. Another popular shore-fishing spot is along the lake's southern park boundary that parallels Carverton Trucksville Road. There is a parking area and boat launch along that road.

The lake has a diverse fish community that includes largemouth bass, brown bullheads, yellow bullheads, bluegills, pumpkinseeds, black crappies, muskellunge, chain pickerel, walleyes, and yellow perch. Many of these fish were stocked as fingerlings years ago. Nice-size brook and rainbow trout are stocked regularly. The lake also has an ample population of alewives, a great food source for the big predators like bass, muskies, and walleyes.

Frances Slocum is a great place to target bass, walleyes, and muskellunge. The lake is managed with Big Bass regulations. Consult the *2007 Pennsylvania Fishing Summary* for this program's seasons, sizes, and creel limits.

The lake also provides year-round fishing opportunities for trout. It's an Approved Trout Water open to year-round fishing. Approved Trout Water regulations and Extended Season size and creel limits apply. Anglers can fish for trout during the closed season from March 1 to the trout opener, but they aren't allowed to keep any trout. Some trout anglers like to concentrate their fishing efforts near the southern part of the lake and the area near the dam along Carverton Trucksville Road. Paste baits seem to work well for trout in these areas, especially in the spring. Live baits like worms and minnows also work well for the trout.

Ice fishing

Frances Slocum is a wonderful lake to ice fish. Ice fishing is permitted on the entire lake except in the ice skating area. Park Manager Kris Baker says that ice anglers will fish just about any part of the lake and that all areas are good. The lake usually has a long ice season.

Panfish and trout are cooperative during the winter. Some ice anglers also target muskellunge. One or two lucky anglers will pull a trophy-size musky through the ice every winter, usually in the 40- to 50-inch range. The standard ice equipment of tip-ups and jigging rods tipped with live bait or small lures works well. Baker advises that ice anglers avoid the areas immediately around the dam or fishing pier because the ice often doesn't form well near those structures. Anglers should also avoid the areas on the lake's western leg. It's the first to freeze, but many springs in that area make ice travel there risky.

Boating

Frances Slocum Lake is also a nice place to take a quiet boat ride. The lake's unique shape provides some interesting paddling by canoe or kayak. Bring your binoculars and visit early in the morning or during late-evening hours for some wildlife-watching as you paddle along the shore.

Boaters and boat anglers have several options for launching boats. The main boat launch is located near the fishing pier and "ice skating" area on the lake's eastern leg. There is also a boat launch along Carverton Trucksville Road. There are courtesy docks in some areas. A third option is to launch your boat from the shoreline near the parking area on the lake's western leg. Canoeists and kayakers can carry their boats from the parking lot to the water. Anyone interested in mooring a boat at the park should contact the park office for details.

Boaters should be aware that Frances Slocum is an electric-motors-only lake. If you don't have a boat, consider renting a paddle boat, canoe, or rowboat from the concession.

Frances Slocum is a senior and family-friendly place to spend a day in the outdoors. The park is close to many people in the Wyoming Valley. It's easy to reach. Walking your family and gear to your fishing spot is an easy task from the parking areas. There are plenty of fish to be caught. There are lots of other activities if your family needs a break from the fishing. The park has nearby facilities like picnic areas, camp sites, restrooms, a playground, swimming pool, and an environmental interpretive center.

If you don't have fishing gear, the Commission has partnered with the park to provide a Fishing Tackle Loaner Program. Visitors can go to the park office and borrow a rod, reel, and tackle at no charge for a day. The bait is on you! If you need some help getting started, consider attending a Commission family fishing program at the park. More information on the program can be found by visiting the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**.

Walt Dietz is the Fish & Boat Commission's Northeast Region aquatic resources program specialist.

More Information

Visit Francis Slocum State Park's web site for driving directions and more information: **www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/francesslocum.aspx**.

For fishing regulations and more detailed information on catching fish, visit the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**.



Basic Spinning
ROD AND REEL UPKEEP

by Chris Gorsuch
photos by the author

Rod and reel care is something every angler should embrace. Today's reels are smoother than ever, but the cost of modern outfits comes at a premium. That's why a little care goes a long way in protecting your investment. Keeping gear at its best level of performance and reducing the risk of malfunction while the rod and reel are used are the goals.

Basic cleaning, lubrication, and servicing once a season is often all it takes to gain years of service from most any outfit. The end of the fishing season, when cold weather and ice arrive, is one of the best times for checking each outfit's operation, cleaning, and lubricating.

Work area

Set up your work area before getting too involved. Place an old pillow case or towel as a drop sheet that allows clean space for reel parts, cleaning materials, and tools. Gather a few small rags and cotton swabs for cleaning and wiping down components. Select a few small screwdrivers and reel lubricant.

Keep the schematic handy for the reel you will be working on. Schematics often come with the reel when purchased, and they should be filed for reference for cleaning and lubricating. One of the many wonders of the World Wide Web is the ability to access reel schematics for most modern reels on the market. A quick search can often result in free schematic access by the manufacturer and other sources. Reel manufacturers have cleaning and lubrication tips, but some reels under warranty require annual service from a certified service center.

Use an old egg carton, or several cartons, for placing parts you disassemble. The compartments keep parts separate, and you can easily establish the order in which you removed the parts. For this purpose, you may want to number each compartment with an indelible-ink pen.

With the working area ready, the first step is simple: Detach the reel from the rod and take time to remove old fishing line from the spool. Simply open the bail and take line by hand or use a wooden dowel and a cordless drill to remove the fishing line. Many tackle shops accept discard-

ed monofilament fishing line, so recycle the old stuff when possible.

After you remove the line, spin the reel handle a few times to make sure that the reel is operating properly. Open and close the bail to check function. It should open and close completely without hanging up. Rough reel operation or scraping sounds may indicate worn, dirty, or damaged parts. Run through the basic cleaning and lubrication steps first and recheck the reel operation. If problems persist, seek a service center or use the schematic diagram to remove the body plate and inspect the internal components.



Remove old line from the reel first. Then start your reel upkeep tasks with lubricating the pivot points on both sides of the bail. Open and close the bail a few times. Rough reel operation or scraping sounds may indicate worn, dirty, or damaged parts.

Basic maintenance

Remove the spool and handle, keeping parts in the egg carton compartments. Clean the spool inside and out. Spray a water-displacing penetrating oil or household oil on a clean rag to help wipe dirt and grime off the components. While cleaning and wiping down the reel, resist applying the oil directly onto the reel components until you clean away any dirt and debris. Wipe down the handle and the reel's outside body, removing grime and buildup. Use cotton swabs gently to remove grime from tough-to-reach areas. When clean, use a quality reel lubricant to lubricate lightly the reel's exposed and working parts.

Start by lubricating the pivot points on both sides of the bail. Lubricate the bushings and bearings through the handle access points. Lubricate the handle shaft and the finger grip pin. Lubricate the reel shaft.

Assemble the reel and with a clean rag clean off excess lubricant. A light coating is better than excessive lubrication.

Test the drag resistance by tightening the drag and hand-turning the spool. A wide range of resistance should be available. If not, consider replacing the drag washers or having the reel serviced for this task. Once tested, reduce the drag completely for long-term storage. Keeping the drag on full can damage the drag washers because they would be compressed for such a long time.

Check the reel's operation again. Make sure the spool rises and falls on the shaft and that the handle turns easily and smoothly. Open and close the bail to make sure the spring isn't weak or worn. The bail should open and lock, and it should close with a quick snap. Check the anti-reverse and the free spool switch to make sure they operate as expected.

When finished, store the reel in a closed reel pouch or in a padded reel case. The case helps protect the reel and



Lubricate the bushings and bearings through the handle access points. Spray a little penetrating oil on a clean rag and wipe dirt and grime off the components. While cleaning and wiping down the reel, resist spraying the oil directly onto the reel components until after you clean away dirt and debris.

keeps dust and other debris away. Depending on use, this short, 10-minute preventive maintenance can also be performed throughout the fishing season.

Rod care tips

With light soap and water, go over the entire rod. Check the guide wraps for wear marks or unwinding. Inspect the guides close up for cracks. An easy way to ensure that the guides are smooth is to run a piece of nylon hose through each guide. If the nylon hose hangs up or catches, the guides should be replaced.

Check the rod for deep nicks in the rod blank. If left unrepaired, they can weaken and damage the rod. Rod-building and repair kits are easy to obtain if you need to make these kinds of repairs.

If using two-piece rods, a light coating of paraffin wax on the ferrule end will keep the joint sound. The wax also helps keep the rod sections from sticking together.

Check the reel seat to ensure that the lock ring is sound and that there's no corrosion on the seat itself. Soap and water can help remove dirt buildup. Cork handles can also be cleaned with soapy water. Some anglers use fine-grade steel wool to scrub their cork handles clean. Use care if you go this route, and very lightly rub the handles to clean the hand oils off the handles. Clean foam grips with soap and water. Rinse them when cleaned to remove all the soap.

Store your rods in a case or in a safe area where nothing rests on or against the rods. Vertical and horizontal rod racks can be an inexpensive purchase that makes storing and protecting fishing rods easy.

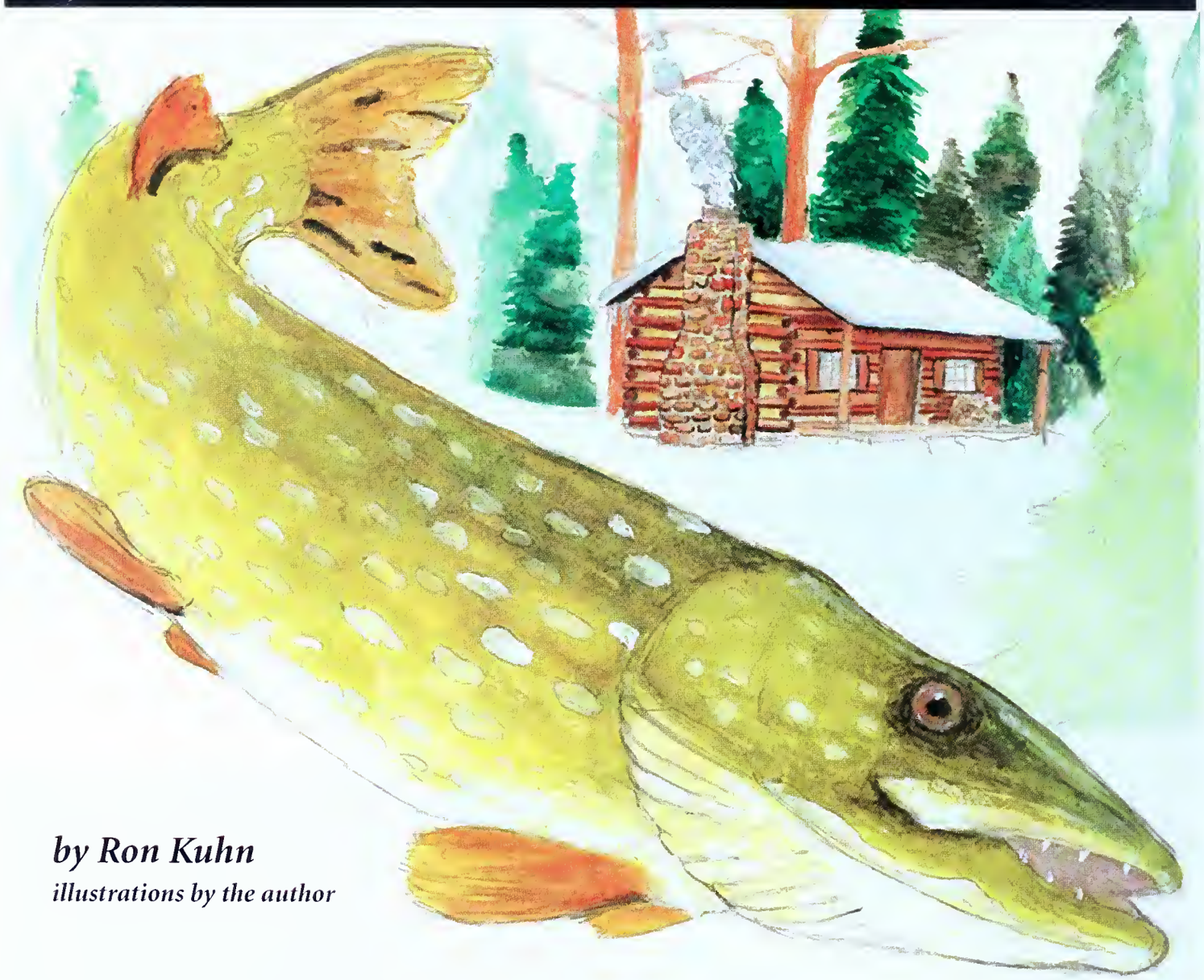


Lubricate the handle shaft and the finger grip pin. Wipe down the handle and the outside body of the reel to remove grime and buildup. Use cotton swabs to remove grime from tough to reach areas. When these parts are clean, use a quality reel lubricant to lightly lubricate the reel's exposed and working parts.



Lubricate the reel shaft. After you re-assemble the reel, check the reel's operation. Make sure the spool rises and falls on the shaft and that the handle turns easily and smoothly. Check the anti-reverse and the free spool switch to make sure they operate as expected.

REFLECTING ON THE WATER
Ice Fishing, Ice Skating, and the Cabin



by Ron Kuhn
illustrations by the author

The yellow flame danced for several seconds as it consumed the dry, dead hemlock branches. The fire began to grow in the wood stove, and Jack nudged the door until it was almost closed. With the draft open, the fire began to draw through the old stone chimney as Jack lit the propane lights in the old log cabin. Beth and the kids kept their snowsuits and jackets on, even though the black stove began to heat the small cabin and eventually Ethan couldn't see his breath anymore.

With the cabin well lit and the fire burning, the family began carrying in their gear for the weekend. Snow had blanketed the mountains and the lake the night before, creating a velvety smooth, white landscape. Jack decided to take a break from his business to spend some time with the kids away from all the conveniences of home. He learned about the cabin from Mark, a fisherman he had helped several winters earlier while fishing Elk Creek in Erie. The cabin wasn't used much because the owners were busy with the new restaurant they had opened in their hometown. Mark offered the use of his cabin after Jack loaned him a fly rod to replace the one he had shut in his car door. Mark promised that the lake held some large northern pike and good numbers of plump yellow perch.

After about an hour of cleaning, the cabin began to feel like home. Old fishing and hunting magazines were stacked on a bookcase next to some outdoor novels. Ethan sat on a chair by the wood stove, leafing through an issue featuring ice fishing.

"Are there any sturgeon in this lake?" He asked. "Nope, mostly pike, walleyes, and perch," Jack said. The kids sat in

front of the wood stove gazing through the open door at the flames, and Jack told them stories about the big north woods pike.

"In the summertime this lake loses a lot of ducks and geese, and the beaver don't fare well, either. There is a pike as long as a cord of wood and as thick as a pot-bellied stove in there." Spellbound, the kids listened as Jack described different sightings of the monstrous fish.

After they had heated the final s'more, Jack loaded the wood stove for the night and adjusted the damper so it would burn slowly overnight. Everyone crawled deeply into a sleeping bag, as if they were bears before hibernating.

Early the next morning, Jack rekindled the coals with some small pine billets he had split the night before. While the fire began to take, he loaded some dry red oak into the stove. Ethan and Ellie awoke to the smell of sizzling bacon and eggs cooking in an old frying pan on the stove.

After breakfast, Jack and Ethan headed out onto the lake, towing their ice fishing sled. Jack pointed to a large mound near the water's edge on the far end of the lake.

"What is that, Dad?" Ethan asked. "That is a beaver lodge. You won't be able to see them with 7 inches of ice on the lake, but in the summertime you can watch them from a distance, swimming around, eating and working."

Jack removed the guards from the ice auger blades and began drilling into the ice as Ethan watched. After several minutes, Jack bored through the ice and set up a jigging rod for the eager boy to start fishing. As Jack bored several other "test" holes, Ethan jigged a red and white spoon, hoping the monster pike would take a bite. After some jigging with no luck, Ethan moved to another spot that his father had opened. After awhile, he began catching yellow perch, not very big ones, but it was better than nothing.



Jack set several tip-ups within view of the cabin and decided the two of them should return to the cabin for some hot chocolate and coffee. Ellie watched with anticipation for the flags to spring up on the lake, and Ethan warmed his toes next to the wood stove. Beth was making some toasted ham and cheese sandwiches on the stove while Jack leafed through some of the old magazines, thinking back on the gear he used as a kid.

After warming up in the cabin for awhile, everyone headed back onto the lake. Jack cleared an area for Beth and Ellie's ice skating while Ethan checked the lines. After catching many perch and several small pike, the guys moved to another area to try for a bigger pike. Jack decided to pull up the lines after an hour or so to head in to the cabin to get warm again and start dinner.

Deer steaks sizzled in the foil packs stuffed with carrots, onions, potatoes, and several sauces mixed together. As dinner cooked on the wood stove, Ethan took a nap on the couch while Jack filleted the handful of pike and perch they had caught that afternoon. Daylight was fading when Beth noticed some deer behind the cabin feeding on some field corn they had placed on the deer feeder. Ethan awoke in time to see a small buck with spiked horns work his way in to feed.

As everyone ate the foil dinners, lights from a vehicle shone through the cabin windows as it pulled up the road and parked in front of the cabin. Jack excused himself from the table to see who was outside. As he opened the door, Uncle Gene greeted him with his familiar voice. Everyone was excited to see Gene come through the door. Beth asked if he had had dinner yet. "Nope, but whatever you are cooking sure smells good," he said. Beth had made an extra foil pack just in case he was able to make it.

As Gene ate his dinner, Ethan told him about the giant pike that waited for him in the lake and about the beaver and ducks. Gene asked Ethan if he thought he could get a fish as wide as a pot belly stove through a 4-inch hole.

"I figure if I can get him to the hole, you guys could help chip away the edge enough to get him out." Gene chuckled, "If you can get that fish to the hole, I'll personally pull him out with my bare hands!"

After dinner Beth pulled two pies from the top of the stove that she had prepared earlier.

"Ethan, could you please go out and get the gallon of vanilla ice cream off the porch?" Everyone sat around the wood stove again, but this evening the treat was homemade apple and cherry pie a la mode.

The next morning the guys headed out for some fishing. After several hours they had two nice pike and a bunch of perch. Beth came out to take a picture of the guys with their catch and to tell them that lunch was almost ready. After lunch everyone began packing for the trip home. Jack stopped loading the stove so the cabin began to cool quickly. Ethan decided to ride home with his Great-Uncle Gene. As they followed Jack, he began making plans to capture the giant pike. "I'll need your help you know, Uncle Gene." Gene smirked. "You let me know what you need me to do and I'll be ready."

The two vehicles headed south, and another trip was already in the making.

THE BUL

by Andrew L. Shiels

Frogs and toads are members of the Class Amphibia and the Order Anura, and researchers and hobbyists often call them "anurans." Pennsylvania's frogs are further grouped into the true frogs (Family Ranidae, six species, including the bullfrog) and the tree frogs (Family Hylidae, seven species). Our toads belong to two families, the Bufonidae (three species) and the Pelobatidae (one species). Worldwide there are some 3,500 known species of frogs and toads, although this number continues to increase almost annually as new species are discovered in the rainforests of tropical regions around the world. In North America, there are some 81 species.



illustration-Tom Duran Jr.

Bullfrogs are a dominant predator in their realm. They eat just about anything they can catch and swallow, including insects, fish, crayfish, worms, snakes, frogs, and even small birds.

LFROG



photo-Andrew J. Shiels

As with most amphibians and reptiles, there is an inverse relationship between the number of species and distance from the warm, tropical regions. That is, as you travel toward the poles, species diversity declines. Pennsylvania's geographic position in a temperate climatological zone and a wide diversity of landforms ranging from the tidal coastal plain wetlands to the Appalachian highlands have created habitat conditions for a relatively diverse group of species.

Pennsylvania's 16 frog and toad species range in size from the tiny spring peeper, which reaches adult lengths of just over 1 inch, to the bullfrog, which tops out at 8 inches long. Spring peepers weigh less than a quarter-ounce, while adult bullfrogs can easily weigh over a pound.

Frog and toad habitats range from the totally aquatic bullfrog, which never strays more than a few feet from the water's edge, to the gray tree frog *(Hyla versicolor)*, which spends much of its time in trees hunting for insects and invertebrates. The moist skin of most frogs restricts them to the water or wet environments and microhabitats where humidity is high and water loss through the skin is low.

Toads, on the other hand, have dry, warty skin, which minimizes water loss and lets them occupy habitats far from water and high humidity. Still, even toads need some moisture, and they possess specially modified feet with horny protuberances that assist their burrowing into the soil.

Pennsylvania's largest frog, the bullfrog, *Rana catesbiana*, reaches up to 8 inches in length. There are no dorsolateral ridges. The body is robust and often flabby in appearance. Basic colors are green, green with darker spots or mottles, and occasionally dark brown. There are often bars on the hind legs. The belly and underside of the throat are white or cream-colored. The tympanum is very obvious. In males it is larger than the eye, and in females it is the same size or smaller than the eye. Bullfrogs have huge hind feet, and large front feet with long but thick toes.

The bullfrog is a species of slow or still waters. Canals, ponds, lakes, backwaters, and other slow, soft-bottomed permanent waterways may all harbor bullfrogs. The bullfrog's range is statewide.

The peak of breeding occurs in June. The call is classically known as a deep, bass "*jug 'o rum*" bellow. Calling and mating usually occur at night. Males attract females and mating occurs in the water. Up to 25,000 eggs are deposited in a mass that attaches to submerged vegetation. Eggs hatch in about 14 days and the tadpoles metamorphose in one to two years. Before metamorphosis, tadpoles can reach lengths of around 5 inches.

Except for resting and basking on the edge of ponds, lakes, or rivers, this species is almost totally aquatic and is never found more than a few feet from the safety of the water. Bullfrogs often rest in or on mats of filamentous algae to bask in the sun and lay in wait for prey. Bullfrogs are a dominant predator in their realm. They eat just about anything they can catch and swallow, including insects, fish, crayfish, worms, snakes, frogs, and even small birds. To ensure conservation of this species, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission has instituted seasons, daily limits, and possession limits, and it has maintained a prohibition on the use of artificial lights to capture bullfrogs.

For more information on the bullfrog and all of Pennsylvania's amphibians and reptiles, visit the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**. On the main page's left side, hold your cursor over "Non-game Species" and navigate to "Amphibians & Reptiles."

aRT *from the Water*

compiled by Spring Gearhart

Featured Artist: George LaVanish

For over 30 years, George LaVanish of Tyrone, Pennsylvania, has been creating outdoor scenes and wildlife illustrations for magazines, books, and limited-edition prints. To date, he has illustrated 10 outdoor books and has been recognized as the National Whitetails Unlimited Artist of the Year.

LaVanish graduated from the Art Institute of Philadelphia in 1974. He was then employed as a graphic artist/illustrator at Penn State for 10 years and began freelancing.

George has designed stamps for the National Wildlife Federation print programs as well as other national and state organizations.

He painted the PA Trout Unlimited print series, which features a presidential edition signed by former President Jimmy Carter. LaVanish also illustrated the first Mid-Atlantic Audubon Society print, *Autumn Blue,* and worked with Babe Winkelman of *Good Fishing* on a largemouth bass print entitled *Last Catch.*

In the late 1970s, George began working with the Pennsylvania Game Commission's *PA Game News.* And in the 1980s, he began creating artwork for *Pennsylvania Angler* magazine.

LaVanish owns Wilderness Editions, a publisher of fine art prints. Since 1994, Wilderness Editions has been producing and distributing a wide assortment of wildlife art prints, including the Pennsylvania trout/salmon stamp. George illustrated the 1999 PA trout/salmon stamp. Wilderness Editions publishes the trout/salmon stamp artwork for limited-edition prints, patches, and medallions each year. Wilderness Editions also produces the Commission's annual calendar with assistance from Cabela's. LaVanish painted the Commission's coolwater/warmwater print series, and one of his paintings was featured on the Commission's 2003 Conservation Stamp and made available as a print.

Crappie, an acrylic painting featured in this issue, was completed for the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission as part of the Pennsylvania Game Fish Series.

To view George LaVanish's artwork, go to www.wildernesseditions.com, call 800-355-7645, or visit George at one of the following shows: Somerset Galleries, January 12-14, Somerset, PA; Eastern Sports & Outdoor Show, February 3-10, Farm Show Complex, Northeast Hall, Booth 315, Harrisburg, PA; or the Allegheny Sport & Outdoor Show, February 14-18, Booth 424, Monroeville, PA.





Partnerships



by Spring Gearhart
photos by the author

Since 1932, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission has been partnering with sportsmen's clubs and organizations through it Cooperative Nursery Program to stock fish in Pennsylvania's waterways. In 2006, the 171 cooperative nurseries throughout Pennsylvania stocked almost 3 million fish.

37 years as a nursery

Since 1969, the Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association has been dedicated to preserving and maintaining great trout fishing on Fishing Creek and several other Columbia County waterways through the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's Cooperative Nursery Program and other related efforts.

"I have lived here my entire life and see people from all over Pennsylvania and other states visiting the area to fish. It brings a lot of business to the local community," says Clair Harvey, Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association president.

There are over 475 members in Fishing Creek Sportsman's Association. The majority of these members are from Columbia County and surrounding areas. Some members are from other parts of the state such as Johnstown and Philadelphia, while others are out-of-state members.

"We have a great group of guys who accomplish a lot," says Harvey.

Location

The nursery is located adjacent to and on property owned by the Benton VFW. The Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association has a 25-year lease with the VFW.

Operation

About seven members are actively involved in the nursery's operation, which includes monitoring the fish, bagging fish food for sale, mowing, and caring for the Benton VFW Sportsmen's Association rifle range. These members care for the nursery on a weekly rotational basis. Students from Bloomsburg Vo-Tech help once a year with clean-up and maintenance of the trout nursery.

The Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association Trout Nursery is open to the public all year long. The rifle range is open only Benton VFW members.

Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association Trout Nursery is one of the only nurseries in the state where the raceway is built into the waterway, a tributary of Fishing Creek known as the mill race.

At a Glance

Nursery's Name: Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association Trout Nursery

Operated by: Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association

Established: 1969

Years in Operation: 37

Chapter Membership: over 475

Active Nursery Operation Membership: about 7

Type of Fish Raised: brook trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, and golden rainbow trout

Quantity Stocked: over 20,000 trout each year



The Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association has over 475 members. Above are (back-left to right) Stanley Temple, Clair Harvey, John Sibly, and Shawn Freed; (front-left to right) John Kishbaugh, Bill Repko, and Jim McMahan.

During 1850, the Shannon Mill was constructed on this property. The mill stopped operating in 1943. In the 1940s, the dam spanning Fishing Creek and the mill race were in need of repair.

In July 1964, anglers recognized the potential of the spot and held a meeting at the Benton VFW. The meeting resulted in the creation of a committee to obtain funding to repair the dam. Local businesses, VFW members, and residents worked together to raise money, prepare

Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association Trout Nursery

plans and specifications, and get bids. The contract was awarded in September 1964, and the dam was rebuilt in October 1964. Improvements to the dam resulted in several new springs opening and increased water depth.

On July 24, 1969, the Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association started its cooperative trout nursery using the improved mill race.

After the flood of June 2006, the dam needed to be repaired again. Although the dam held back the water, preventing a tragedy to the trout nursery, $6,000 in repairs was needed. The Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association and the Benton Golf Course split the cost of the repairs.



Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association stocks six times a year. Members stock 1,000 trout every Monday starting the first week after trout season.

Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association raises over 20,000 trout per year including brook, brown, rainbow, and golden rainbow trout. These fish are supplied by the Commission. Last year, the association raised 9,000 brook trout, 4,000 brown trout, 9,000 rainbow trout, and 300 golden rainbow trout.

The association receives fingerlings in July. "We receive our fingerlings as late as possible in the summer to decrease fish mortality. Consistent water temperature is one of our biggest challenges," says Clair Harvey. Fish are fed once a day with 24-hour belt feeders.



Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association Trout Nursery is one of the only nurseries in the state where the raceway is built into the waterway, a tributary of Fishing Creek known as the mill race.

Stocking

Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association primarily stocks all of Fishing Creek except restricted areas. Members also stock Little Fishing Creek, West Creek, Briar Creek (upper and lower), Green Creek, and Raven Creek. Members stock 1,000 trout every Monday starting the first week after trout season. The association stocks trout six times every year. A different area is stocked each time and supplements the Commission's stocking program.

Support and funding

The Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association, in cooperation with the Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy, is working to ensure that residents, visitors, and future generations have access to fishing along Fishing Creek.

"The trout nursery is a big asset to the community and tourism," says Clair Harvey.

The Sportsmen's Association owns three tracts of land, totaling 100 acres along Fishing Creek. Fishing Creek



Bagged feed may be purchased near the Benton Golf Course or the Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association Trout Nursery to feed the fish. The cost is 25 cents per bag. During peak months, bagged feed sales average $200 each week.

runs the length of Columbia County before reaching the Susquehanna River west of Bloomsburg. The creek's watershed includes more than 385 square miles with a mix of forest and farmland.

The three tracts of land owned by the Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Club are known as Power Dam (30 acres), Dug Hill (45 acres), and Meadow Lane (25 acres). All this land is in conservatory status with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, restricting the land from development and keeping it open for public use. With support from county commissioners, the land is tax exempt. Additional land along Fishing Creek is leased by the association from owner Kathy Wells.

Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Club is involved in the Pennsylvania Stewardship Forest Program, which is administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry. This program helps forestland owners learn how to improve and maintain the land's natural resources.

Operational costs are met through 25-cent bagged feed and food stand profits, raffle ticket sales, membership fees, donations, and grants.

Bagged feed is used to feed the fish and is available near the Benton Golf Course or the Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association Trout Nursery. During peak months, bagged feed sales average $200 each week.

The membership fee is $5.00 per person and includes the association's newsletter. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at the Benton VFW at 7 p.m. Membership cards are available at the Benton Sports Center.

Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association has received several cooperative nursery grants from the Commission. In 2002, the association received $1,000 for belt feeders and water diversion repair; $3,000 in 2003 for raceway retaining wall repair; and $1,890 in 2004 for a pressure washer, a belt feeder, and nets.

Activities

Each year the association holds an annual trout derby the first Sunday in June at the Benton Golf Course for children age 12 and under. The derby, which has been in operation for three generations, is attended by around 400 young people and every participant receives a prize. Special prizes are given for the largest fish of each species. Prizes are donated by local businesses and the Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association. After the derby, the nursery is thoroughly cleaned. This is the only time there are no fish in the raceway.

Recognition

The Fish & Boat Commission has awarded the association a certificate of merit for every five years of service as a cooperative nursery. In 2004, the association received its 35-year service certificate.

For more information on the Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association or to make a donation, contact Clair Harvey, 157 Distillery Hill Road, Benton, PA 17814.



The Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association owns three tracts of land, totaling 100 acres along Fishing Creek. The creek's watershed includes more than 385 square miles with a mix of forest and farmland.

WCO Diary

by WCO Lewis Sweigart

Pollution Issues and Winter Woes

Growing up in the Philadelphia area, I have always been involved in efforts to protect the environment. My mother, a high school biology teacher, started teaching my sisters and me early about protecting the environment. I recall many times my mother stopping alongside the road to show us an unusual plant or animal. The smell of pine needles and freshwater streams hung in the air as we looked closer at the nature around us. She would show us how the different kinds of wildlife interacted with one another, all of which forming a comprehensive ecological system.

As I grew older, I became more interested in the environment while becoming an active member of the Boy Scouts, an organization dedicated to teaching youth about protecting the environment. After several years in the organization, I achieved the rank of Eagle Scout. Later I attended Eastern College in Delaware County. During my college days, I volunteered with the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, teaching safe boating courses as well as performing Auxiliary safety patrols on the Delaware River. After college, I worked in the Philadelphia area, performing several different jobs both in law enforcement and in the private sector.

I began working with the Commission in 1999 as a deputy waterways conservation officer. Later I served as a state park ranger and as a Pennsylvania Capitol Police officer. In 2004, I accepted a full-time job with the Fish & Boat Commission as a waterways conservation officer, which brought me into a position where I could better protect the environment.

All pollution issues concern us, but hitting home the closest is what heats our homes and keeps us warm during the winter: Our home heating equipment. Normally, we have good functioning heaters that we maintain well as recommended by the manufacturer. Nevertheless, some of this equipment ages and falls into disrepair. This older equipment is prone to leaking and breaking down, which then can cause pollutions to occur.



photo-courtesy of WCO Lewis Sweigart

Holes can form in rusting oil tanks and lines, and oil will begin to leak, possibly polluting our drinking water and streambeds.

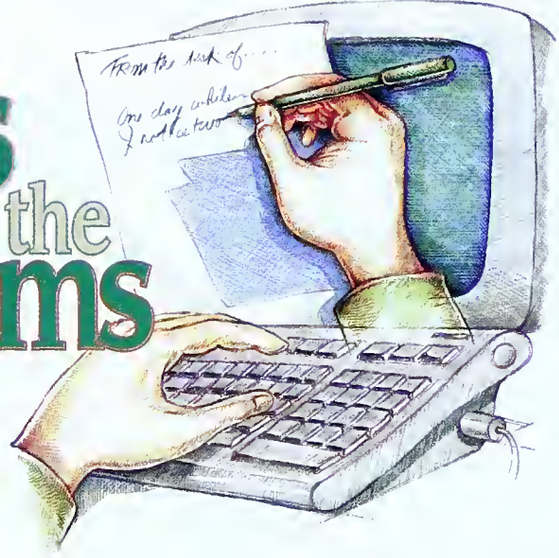
I'm focusing more on oil heating and fuel oil itself. A source of warmth for our homes and fuel for our equipment can be a source of death for aquatic animals and a source of contamination in our groundwater. If the fuel line from an old oil tank begins to rust, over several years a small hole will form. As the metal continues to degrade, oil will begin to leak into the ground. The hole might be underground and not seen, or it might be above ground and just missed. This leaking oil can pollute our drinking water and local streambeds.

A stream covered over in an oil sheen can be detrimental to all the wildlife in and near the stream. The petroleum blocks the sun and becomes toxic to the life in the stream. Fish can die for various reasons when the chemistry of the stream changes. The oxygen content can decrease and cause many fish to die. The last thing we want is the water to become polluted this way, not to mention how much it can cost to clean up the problem. Nothing can be worse than having a leak in an old oil tank most of the year. Filling that old tank with more than 250 gallons of oil that can pour right out creates a potentially hazardous and costly situation.

Many old houses have a drain, but few people really know where that drain leads. Discover that in your home, and if it pours into a stream nearby, bring it into compliance with local housing codes, if it doesn't already comply. Check your tank and oil line to the heater. If you notice something unusual, hire a professional to inspect your equipment. A small repair can save you thousands of dollars in environmental clean-up fees if you were to lose 250 gallons of oil. In addition, continue to check your tank every month or so during the winter. When you smell that telltale pungent odor of heating oil, check it out. Do not just dismiss it—inspect the tank. Not only will you save money, but you may also save your neighborhood from an environmental nightmare. Protect the environment around your house and nearby waterways by remaining vigilant with your own home's potential hazards.

WCO Lewis Sweigart will write "WCO Diary" in 2007 PA Angler & Boater *issues. He is currently assigned to Delaware County.*

Notes from the Streams



Trout Stocking

Stocking trout is usually a pleasant task and one of my favorite duties that I am required to perform. However, some years early in the season we have to use a 24-inch chainsaw to remove the top layers of ice from our frozen lakes. When I say "we," I am speaking of a dedicated group that includes Henry Stintsman, Gary Miller, Greg Slader, Charlie Yatonsky, and retired DWCO John Osborne. Thanks guys.—*WCO Dave Kaneski, Northern Wayne County.*

Much too seriously

The day after the huge snowstorm in February 2003, I was patrolling the Susquehanna River. I watched two fishermen in a pickup pull alongside the road and pull a snow blower out of the back. First, they plowed a spot along the road to park the truck. Then they plowed a path the whole way to the river. This was no easy task because the snow was over 2 feet deep and the path to the river was over 40 yards long. I told them they were taking this fishing thing much to seriously. They just laughed and told me they were avid anglers and avid readers of *PA Angler & Boater* and that they thought this story would make a great addition to "Notes from the Streams." I agreed and told them I would send it in.—*WCO Matthew J. Sodmont, Northern York County.*

Snow up to the knees

In looking at the landscape now (with snow up to one's knees), it's hard to imagine that springtime and warmer weather are just around the corner. And with the thoughts of liquid water come the efforts to stock trout again in Commonwealth lakes, ponds, and streams. I want to take a moment to thank all those who have participated in this end-of-winter ritual in the past, and especially those who assisted last year, when winter did not see fit to end:

- To the Pennsylvania Game Commission crew Mark Kasten, Dave Breese, and Ray Stanis for extricating my state vehicle from the snow along Starrucca Creek while I was "checking road conditions."
- To Jeff Armstrong for volunteering time and a power auger to get the trout through 19 inches of ice and into Quaker Lake.
- To all the landowners in my district who allow access to waterways across their properties and look forward to stocking as much as the fishermen.
- To the veteran volunteers such a John Puglisi, John Katchmore, Bill Perrington, Gordon Moore, Walt Fayocavitz, Rich Volinsky, Paul Sinay, Duane Struppler, Bill Holmes, and Kevin Repshire, who keep things running smoothly, and to some new faces such as Charlie Denkenberger and Jack Hopkins who are quickly becoming "regulars."
- To Steve Schrader, who generally fails to believe how much I appreciate his help with traffic control and with providing for the safety of others.
- To Jeff Allen for his outstanding help in maintaining excellent landowner relations and for stocking Wysox Creek.
- To those former WCOs for sharing their knowledge and continued support, such as Fred Mussell and Warren Singer, who show up to help.

I am sure I haven't mentioned all these volunteers by name, but I look forward to seeing your faces and sharing stories again as the great white fleet begins to roll.—*WCO Bryan C. Bendock, Northern Susquehanna/Eastern Bradford Counties.*

Faylor Lake discussion

Several years ago, I was talking to an ice fisherman at Faylor Lake in Snyder County. He had spent the afternoon on the ice and hadn't caught a thing. I talked to him about the need then for a license increase. He told me that as far as he was concerned, it was a bargain even if we raised the fee. He told me, "I can come out here and fish all day for that price. What else can you do for that little money anymore?" Continuing, he added, "My friends who fish the river—man, they are out there all the time. One of my buddies kept track of how often he went fishing on the river, and he had it figured out that the fishing license cost him literally only pennies!" Surely he's right. For the money, it truly is a bargain!—*WCO Steven Boughter, Snyder/Union and Western Northumberland Counties.*

"In the field"

As a waterways conservation officer, one of the requirements of the job was to establish an office in the home. Shortly after graduation from the 17th WCO Class and being stationed in York County, I traveled to Harrisburg to pick up a desk and some filing cabinets for my new district office. The desk, chair, and filing cabinets took up the entire back of my patrol vehicle, and they needed to be secured with the tailgate down. I decided to patrol the Susquehanna River on my way home. I stopped to check a group of anglers, and one individual scratched his head and commented on how we really do work in the field.—*WCO Patrick W. Ferko, Southern York County.*

Dedicated to the Memory of Commissioner Enoch S. "Inky" Moore Jr.

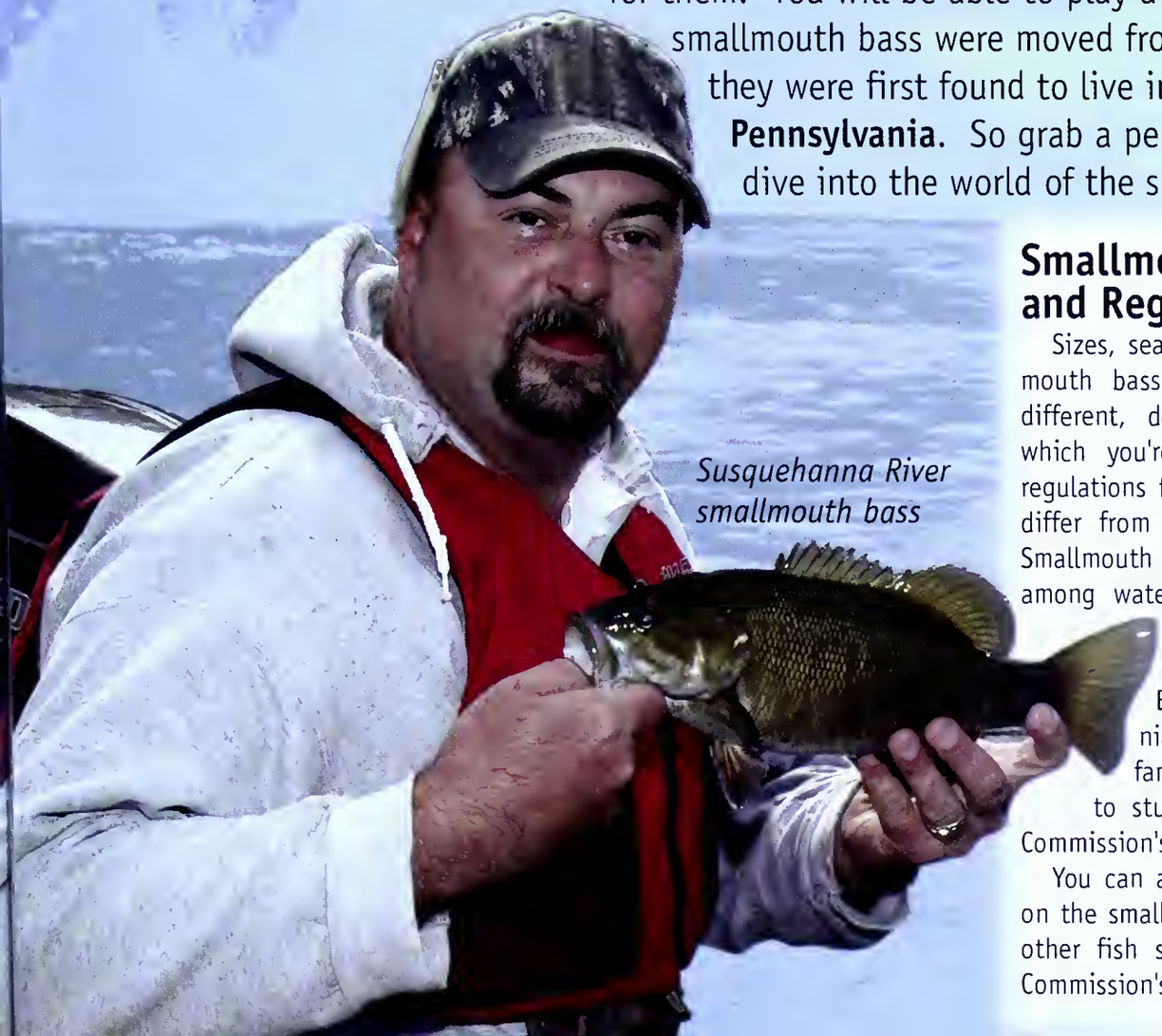
PLAY

Winter 2007

Pennsylvania • League • of • Angling • Youth

Smallmouth Bass

Have you ever heard of a **"bronzeback"**? That is one nickname people use when talking about smallmouth bass. In this PLAY issue, you will learn all about smallmouth bass. You will discover how to tell them apart from other kinds of **bass**, where they live, and what they eat. You'll also learn about their life cycle and why so many people enjoy fishing for them. You will be able to play a game that shows how smallmouth bass were moved from the places where they were first found to live in waters all over **Pennsylvania**. So grab a pencil and get ready to dive into the world of the smallmouth bass!



Susquehanna River smallmouth bass

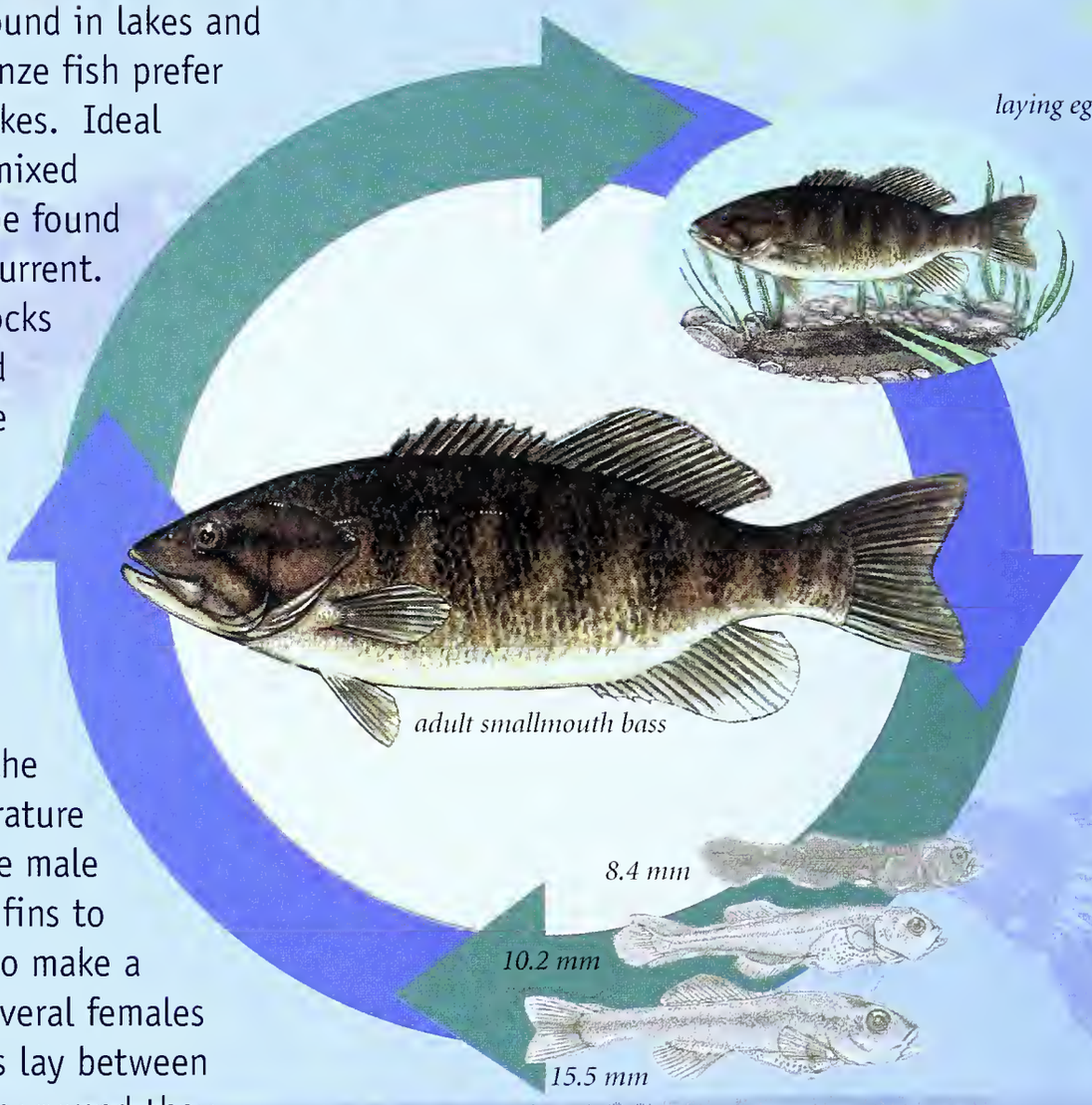
Smallmouth Bass and Regulations

Sizes, seasons, and creel limits for smallmouth bass and largemouth bass can be different, depending on the waterway in which you're fishing. For example, bass regulations for Commonwealth inland waters differ from those of Big Bass regulations. Smallmouth bass regulations also differ among waterways like the Delaware River, Lake Erie, Pymatuning Reservoir, and Conowingo Reservoir. Be sure to consult the Pennsylvania Fishing Summary to become familiar with these regulations, or to study regulations online, visit the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**.

You can also find much more information on the smallmouth bass, and information on other fish species in Pennsylvania, on the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**.

A Bronzeback is Born

Smallmouth bass can be found in lakes and in rivers. These brownish-bronze fish prefer moving water or cool, clear lakes. Ideal **habitat** includes rocky areas mixed with gravel. They can often be found where something breaks the current. These breaks could be large rocks and boulders, fallen trees, and other debris in the water. The dark color and eight to 15 **vertical** bars that run top to bottom along their sides help these fish blend in with rocks and branches.



Smallmouth bass begin to **spawn**, or reproduce, during the spring when the water temperature reaches 60 to 70 degrees. The male builds the nest. He uses his fins to sweep away sand and gravel to make a depression in the bottom. Several females lay eggs in one nest. Females lay between 2,000 and 7,000 eggs for every pound they weigh, each year! The male guards the nest while he waits for the eggs to hatch. Hatching can take two to 10 days, depending on the water temperature.

The young smallmouth, called **fry**, are ready to leave the nest after only five to six days. They are still guarded by the male for a month or more. Zooplankton is their main food from the time they hatch until they are about a half-inch long. When the fry reach between a half-inch to one inch long, they begin to feed on insect larvae. When they grow larger than one inch long, the fry begin to feed on small fish and **crayfish**.

All the smallmouth bass eggs don't hatch. And not all young smallmouth bass survive the first few months. This stage is important. These fish are called "young of the year" (YOY).

Fish & Boat Commission studies have shown that water flow and temperature are the most important factors in young bass survival. Other things such as **pollution** and predators can affect survival of eggs and fry. Conditions during some years cause few eggs to survive. On the other hand, in the best conditions, many young smallmouth bass survive.

In rivers, smallmouth bass populations change because of the conditions that YOY face. When many YOY survive, anglers can expect to see larger fish in three to five years. If few fish survive, fishing can be poor in three to five years!

Here a Bass, There a Bass

Did you know that smallmouth bass and all Pennsylvania black bass species are in the same family as bluegills? They are in the **sunfish** family, or as scientists call it, the Centrarchidae family. Several kinds of bass from the sunfish family can be found in Pennsylvania: Smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, spotted bass, and rock bass. The white bass and striped bass are temperate basses in the Moronidae family.

Largemouth bass can grow to more than 25 **inches** long. Smallmouth bass can grow to about 20 inches long. The mouth of the largemouth bass extends past the eye. Its large mouth allows it to eat bigger food.

Another way to tell the difference between a smallmouth bass and a largemouth bass is to look at their dorsal fins, the ones that are on their backs. The smallmouth bass has a **shallow** notch that separates its dorsal fins. The largemouth has a deeper notch.

The spotted bass is uncommon in our state. It can sometimes be found in the Ohio River near Pittsburgh and in the Beaver River. It looks like a cross between a smallmouth bass and a largemouth bass.



The smallmouth bass has a shallow notch that separates its dorsal fins.

Look at the pictures below and use what you have learned, so far, to figure out which bass (smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, or spotted bass) each sentence describes. When you think you have the right answer, draw a line from the sentence to the picture of that fish.

1. This fish likes to live in deep, moving water.
2. The mouth of this fish extends farther than its eye.
3. Which fish has diamond-shaped spots along its sides?
4. This fish has eight to 15 broken lines that run up and down along its sides.
5. Because it can eat large-sized food, this fish is nicknamed "bucketmouth."
6. This fish is silver-green.
7. This fish is nicknamed "bronzeback."
8. This fish is not commonly found in Pennsylvania.
9. This fish is Pennsylvania's largest member of the sunfish family.

smallmouth bass



largemouth bass



spotted bass



Answers: 1-SM (smallmouth bass), 2-LM (largemouth bass), 3-SP (spotted bass), 4-SM, 5-LM, 6-SP, 7-SM, 8-SP, 9-LM

Smallmouth Bass Game

Follow the journey of smallmouth bass in this game. You will need a game piece (a coin or small stone will do), and a die from another game. Just place your game piece at the starting line and roll the die!



Moving trout for stocking from the hatch house, Pleasant Gap state fish hatchery, around 1920.

A severe storm delays the trip. Lose a turn.

Shortcut over a new bridge, move ahead 2 spaces

Train is speeding downhill. Move ahead 3 spaces.

Pick up fish from the Potomac River. Take an extra turn.

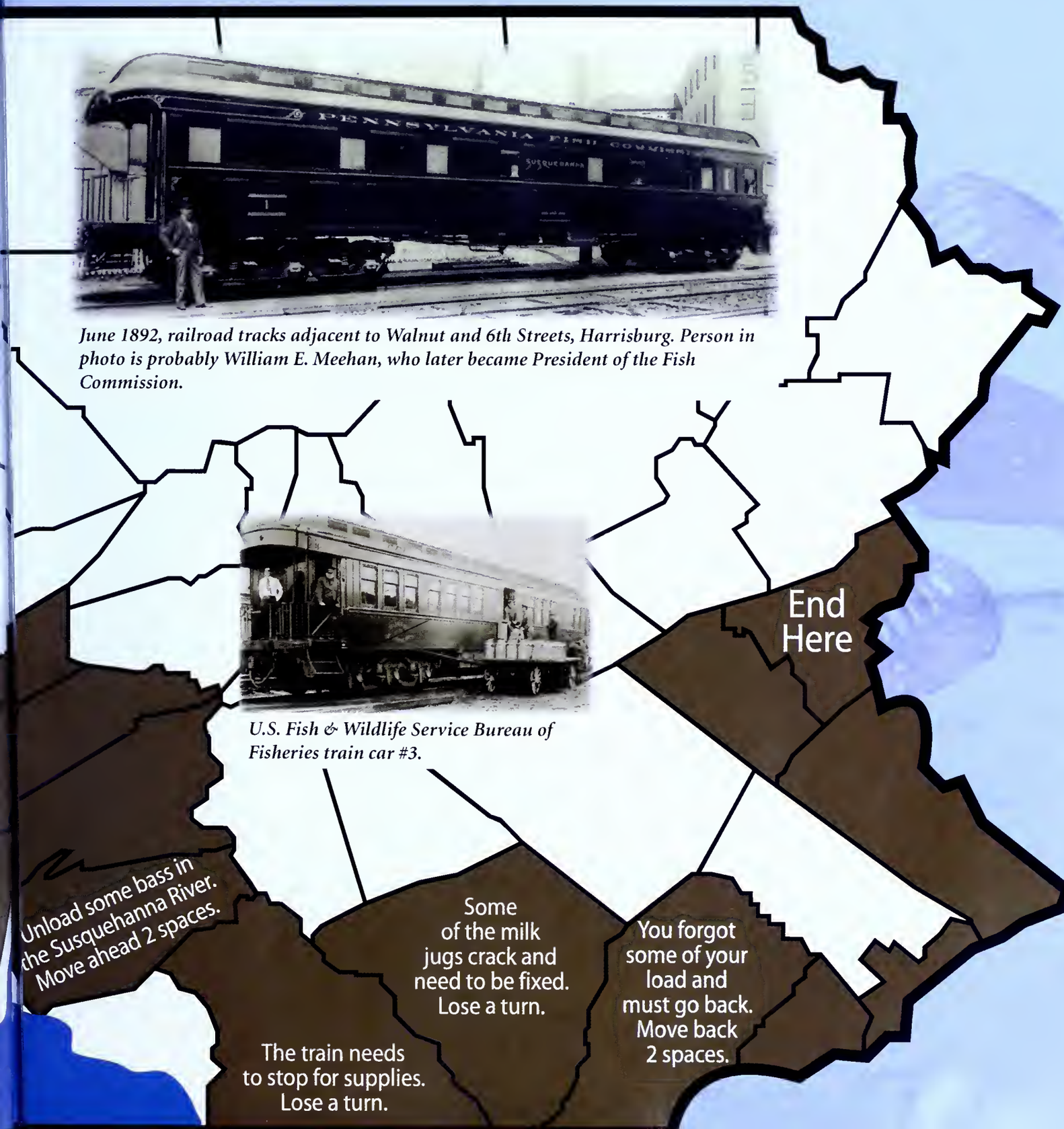
The train can't make it over the mountain, move back 2 spaces.

Start Here

Smallmouth bass are found all across Pennsylvania. But that wasn't always true. Before the mid-1800s, smallmouth bass were found only in the Great Lakes and in the **Ohio** River Watershed. The Ohio River Watershed includes all of the land, streams, and rivers that eventually flow into the Ohio River. How do you think smallmouth bass traveled over land and into the waterways near where you live?

Cars and buses weren't around. During this period our ancestors relied on one means of transportation—trains. Areas that were once separated by land were now connected by the railroads.

Anglers in the eastern part of the state learned of the smallmouth bass fishing in the Potomac River. The ancestors of these fish were stocked using fish taken from the Ohio River. Smallmouth bass were placed in metal milk jugs and loaded on trains headed east. The first stocking occurred in the Lehigh River at Easton around 1862.



June 1892, railroad tracks adjacent to Walnut and 6th Streets, Harrisburg. Person in photo is probably William E. Meehan, who later became President of the Fish Commission.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Bureau of Fisheries train car #3.

Tubing for Smallmouth

"Tubing" is one of the most popular fishing techniques for catching smallmouth bass. Tubing doesn't mean using an old inner tube to float on the water. It is fishing with a tube lure. A tube lure looks like a short piece of tubing with one end closed and the other end shredded or cut into strands. Tubes come in several sizes, but 2-inch to 3-inch tubes work best for catching smallmouth.

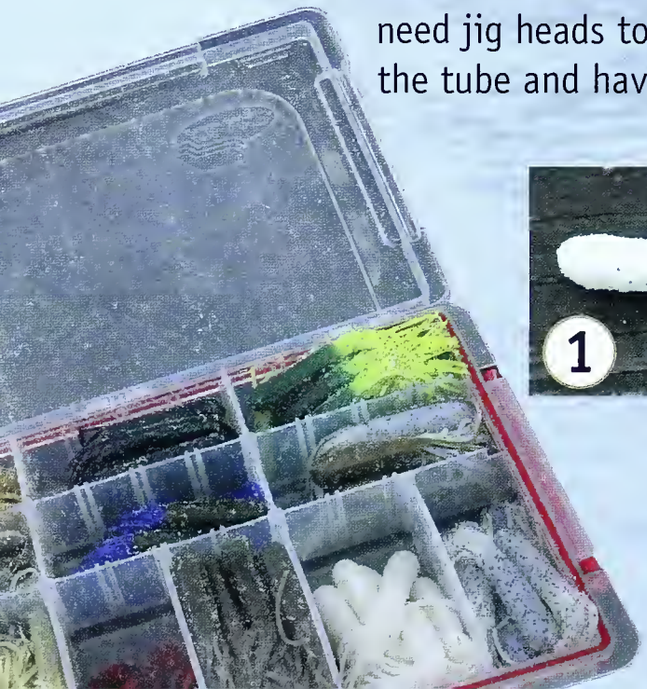


Most shades of green or smoke (gray) tubes are popular among anglers. Devoted tube anglers have several colors of tubes in their tackle boxes. Bass **tournament** anglers have been tubing for several years. They regularly catch smallmouth bass over 20 inches long.

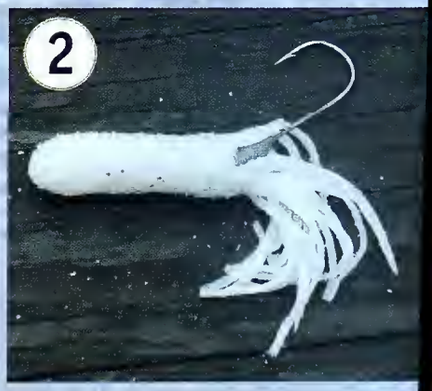
To fish a tube, you need jig heads to slide into the tube and have the jig eye pop up through the tube head. The weight of the **jig head** depends on where you are fishing and the size of the tube.

When fishing a 3-inch tube, a quarter-ounce jig is great for a slow fall and water up to 10 feet deep. If you want the tube to fall through the water slower, use a smaller jig head. If you're using a longer tube, you will need a bigger jig head. Have fun trying different tubes with different-sized jig heads until you find one that works best for you.

Cast your tube lure near rocks and reel in your line slowly. Stop the tube a few times, and let it fall to the bottom near the rocks. Near rocks is a great place to catch smallmouth bass because they like to live near rocky areas, but be careful. It is easy to get snagged when fishing around rocks. Many anglers say that this technique can help you catch smallmouth bass over 20 inches long.









Smallmouth Bass Skills

As you read through this issue of PLAY, you may have noticed that some of the words were highlighted darker than others. Using what you have learned and the darker words you found, complete the words in these 14 sentences.

1. There are three types of ___ A ___S found in Pennsylvania.

2. Ideal smallmouth bass H ___ ___ I T ___ T includes rocky areas with gravel.

3. Bass are members of the ___ ___ N ___ ___ ___ H family.

4. ___ R ___ ___ Z ___ ___ ___ ___ K is one of the nicknames of the smallmouth bass.

5. Dorsal fins are separated by a S ___ ___ ___ ___ O ___ notch on the backs of smallmouth bass.

6. Smallmouth bass have eight to15 V ___ ___ T ___ ___ A ___ broken bars along each side.

7. When female bass ___ P ___ W ___, they lay between 2,000 to 7,000 eggs per pound of body weight.

8. Smallmouth bass were found only in the Great Lakes and the __H __ __ River Watershed until the mid-1800s.

9. A competition to catch fish is called a T ___ ___ ___ N ___ ___ E ___ ___.

10. Smallmouth bass food consists of insect larvae, ___ R___ ___ F ___ ___ H, and fish.

11. The largest smallmouth bass recorded in P ___ ___ ___ S ___ ___V ___ ___ ___ ___ was over 8 pounds.

12. Smallmouth bass can grow 20 I ___ ___ H ___ ___ or more in length.

13. Young fish are called ___ ___ Y.

14. Trash, chemicals, and other materials that shouldn't be in the water are called P ___ ___ ___ U ___ ___ ___ N.

1. Bass. 2. Habitat. 3. Sunfish. 4. Bronzeback. 5. Shallow. 6. Vertical. 7. Spawn. 8. Ohio. 9. Tournament. 10. Crayfish. 11. Pennsylvania. 12. Inches. 13. Fry. 14. Pollution

Smallmouth Bass Under the Ice

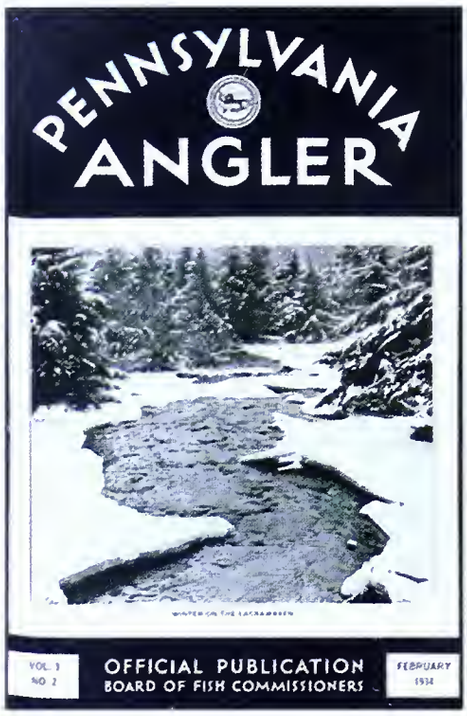
Ice fishing for smallmouth bass can be fun in impoundments—not in rivers or flowing water, even though anglers go after largemouth bass more than they target smallmouth bass. Nevertheless, fishing minnows on tip-ups is effective. You can try your luck for smallmouth bass wherever smallmouths are present in impoundments under safe ice. However, these waterways are proven smallmouth bass ice-fishing spots: Lake Arthur, Moraine State Park, Butler County; Lake Nockamixon, Nockamixon State Park, Bucks County; Blue Marsh Lake, Berks County; High Point Lake, Somerset County; Ridgeway Reservoir, Elk County; and Yellow Creek Lake, Yellow Creek State Park, Indiana County.

Check ice conditions before venturing onto ice. Always go ice fishing with an adult. Visit the Commission's ice fishing web pages on the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**, so that you and any adults with whom you fish become completely familiar with ice safety. On the Commission web site main page's left side, hold your cursor over "Fish." In the drop-down menu, click on "Fishing Fundamentals." Then navigate to "Ice Fishing."



PLAY
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ANGLER ARCHIVES



The first winter scenic photograph to appear on the cover of *PA Angler* was published 73 years ago this February. The picture was an idyllic, black-and-white wintry view of the Lackawaxen River. Unfortunately, the photographer wasn't credited. Since then, winter scenic photographs have appeared on *PA Angler* covers on many December, January, and February issues, and on some November and March issues. Then and now, they mirror Pennsylvania's angling and boating environment. They also provide fresh perspectives and often breathtaking views of wintertime waterways and angling activities.



SAVED BY THE JACKET

Word of Warning Saves Lives

A word to the wise saves lives! On January 18, 1992, Grady Taylor was fishing from his canoe on a river. It was a numbing cold 35 degrees outdoors, and the ice from the shoreline all but covered the river. Despite the cold, Mr. Taylor was hoping that the fishing would be hot near a dam.

Park Ranger Mike Lowry spotted Mr. Taylor in his canoe. Stopping his vehicle near the dam, the ranger got out and yelled at Mr. Taylor to put on his life jacket.

He had a life jacket under the canoe seat, and he put it on. The park ranger gave him a wave, got back in his car, and went on his way.

A few hours later, Mr. Taylor, still wearing the life jacket, fell into the icy water. The life jacket kept him afloat, and he was able to make it to shore. He staggered to the top of the dam and, wet, cold, and unnerved, flagged down a motorist.

Mr. Taylor was taken to the local hospital where he was treated for hypothermia. After his release, he admitted that the act of putting on the life jacket had saved his life!



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Musky Stocking Changes

Nine lakes and a river section have become the first beneficiaries of the Fish & Boat Commission's changed approach to muskellunge stockings, with 15 other waters set for stocking increases in future years.

The stocking changes on waters believed capable of supporting more and larger muskies are one of several moves to improve muskellunge fishing in the Commonwealth. Starting in 2007, musky season will extend year-round for most waters, with a creel limit of one fish that must be at least 40 inches. The muskellunge season used to be closed mid-March through early June and two 30-inch muskies could have been creeled each day.

"Muskellunge represent a true trophy fishery and we're adjusting our management to maximize that trophy potential in those waters best suited for it. For most anglers, a musky is the largest fish they'll ever catch in Pennsylvania waters. And for true musky aficionados, bigger is better. So in response to angler input, we're tweaking the regulations to permit year-round angling opportunities and we're targeting our stocking on those waters with the best potential to be top-notch destinations," said Commission Executive Director Doug Austen.

In 2007 and beyond, the annual allotment of stocked purebred or tiger muskellunge will increase on 15 additional waters. Those waters include the Allegheny Reservoir, Warren County; Canoe Lake, Blair County; Conneaut Lake, Crawford County; Delaware River, Northampton/Monroe/Pike counties; Frances Slocum Lake, Luzerne County; Glendale Lake, Cambria County; Lehigh River, Northampton/Lehigh counties; Lake Arthur, Butler County; Lake Somerset, Somerset County; Rose Valley Lake, Lycoming County; Sayers Lake, Centre County; Shenango Lake, Mercer County; Susquehanna River, Northumberland County; Susquehanna River North Branch, Luzerne County; and the Youghiogheny River, Fayette/Allegheny/Westmoreland counties.

To accommodate the move to more intensive stocking in waters with the best opportunities for muskellunge fishing, the Commission is removing 29 lakes or waterway sections from the stocking program on a trial basis. The waters removed from the musky stocking program were those in which there is little angler interest in musky or tiger musky fishing and/or where there is inadequate forage to support desirable muskellunge or tiger muskellunge populations. Stocking tiger muskellunge will cease in some waters in the native muskellunge range where there is some expectation that muskellunge may reproduce naturally.

Among the waters removed from the muskellunge stocking list are the Monongahela River; Sections 4, 6, 7, and 9 of the Raystown Branch Juniata River; and the Schuylkill River from Flat Rock Dam downstream.

For a complete list of waters removed from the muskellunge stocking list, visit the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us.

While on the site, anglers can also complete an online survey that seeks input on the specific stocking changes and other aspects of muskellunge management in Pennsylvania.

Biologists expect that it will take at least four to eight years until anglers can fully experience the stocking changes. However, there's no need to wait that long to get great musky action. Visit the Commission's musky pages on the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us. Select "Fish" from the main page's left-hand navigation bar, and then click "Pennsylvania Fishes." Select "Species Feature Pages," and then click on the musky picture.

Waterway	2005 Tiger Muskellunge Allotment	Tiger Muskellunge stocked in 2006
Beltzville Lake, Carbon County	3,798	6,785
Cowanesque Reservoir, Tioga County	1,100	4,424
East Branch Clarion River Lake, Elk County	2,050	7,592
Holman Lake, Perry County	500	768
Keystone Lake, Armstrong County	4,750	10,649
Loyalhanna Lake, Westmoreland County	3,706	6,263
Marsh Creek Lake, Chester County	2,699	4,332
Nockamixon Lake, Bucks County	7,252 *	4,425
Sweet Arrow Lake, Schuylkill County	0*	805
Schuylkill River (between Black Rock Dam & Perkiomen Creek)	250	500

* Previously not stocked on an annual basis but slated for annual stocking beginning in 2007. This will increase the average numbers stocked each year.



The Pennsylvania Steelhead Association recently presented a $1,500 grant to the Wesleyville Conservation Club for construction of a new raceway at the club's hatchery in North East. The new raceway will let the hatchery raise an additional 5,000 fingerling steelhead each year. The club will now be able to raise a total of 10,000 to 12,000 fingerlings for stocking in Erie County's public fishing waters. The club is a part of the Commission's Cooperative Nursery Program. The check presentation included (from left) Roy Tenny, Wesleyville Conservation Club member and Pennsylvania Steelhead Association director; Robert Einodshofer, Pennsylvania Steelhead Association director; Ron Dombrowiak, Wesleyville Conservation Club president; and Don Meehl, Wesleyville Conservation Club raceway manager.

Fishin' from the Kitchen

Zingy Lime Panfish Fillets

by Wayne Phillips

Turn panfish fillets in something extra special by adding zingy lime zest to a breadcrumb coating.



photo-Wayne Phillips

Ingredients for four servings:

- ✔ Boneless panfish fillets for 4
- ✔ 4 slices fresh whole wheat bread
- ✔ 2 limes, zest only
- ✔ Salt and black pepper
- ✔ Butter
- ✔ Canola oil

Procedure

Cut fillets into pieces of even thickness. Remove zest from limes using a zester or microplane. Dice bread and pulse with lime zest in a food processor until crumbs are fairly fine. Pat fillets until dry, and season with salt and black pepper. Press breadcrumbs onto them. Pan fry in a mixture of half butter and half canola oil.

Drying the fillets assists the breadcrumbs in sticking to the fish. Wet fillets cause the breadcrumbs to become soggy and prevents their browning. Cutting fillets into slices of even thickness prevents overcooking thinner fillet sections.

Frying fish in fresh breadcrumbs makes a crisper, better tasting coating on fish. Fresh crumbs help prevent the fish from drying out and stick to the fish without the use of an egg wash.

Serve

Serve with a wedge of lime for extra lime flavor. Cheesy mashed potatoes and steamed broccoli make good side dishes.

Musky Stocking Changes

Last October, Chapter 50 of Muskies, Inc., released 500 muskellunge into Marsh Creek Lake, Chester County. The stocking fulfills a club goal to improve muskellunge fishing at the lake and furthers the club's partnership with the Commission.

The Commission has historically stocked Marsh Creek Lake biennially with tiger muskellunge. Success of the tiger muskellunge stocking program and musky anglers' interest in Marsh Creek Lake has led the Commission to include Marsh Creek Lake in the statewide list of "Enhanced Waters." In this case, the enhancement will be that annual tiger muskellunge stocking will replace biennial stocking.

Present at the lake for the stocking were members of MI50, Waterways Conservation Officer Robert J. Bonney, Area 7 Fisheries Technician Bryan Chikotas, and Marsh Creek State Park manager Delores Nygard.

MI50 was founded just three years ago and has grown to a membership of over 60 dedicated anglers from Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The club is dedicated to educating youth and bettering the quality of angling throughout the area.

For information on MI50, visit www.MI50.com. For more details on the new muskellunge regulations for 2007, visit the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us.



photo-Alice Sitt

Important Information About Stocking Fish

Every spring, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission stocks trout in thousands of stream miles and dozens of lakes. Interested anglers and other citizens often arrive to help or watch stockings. The safety of all in attendance often becomes a significant concern, as does the effective stocking of the delicate cargo brought to the water from our hatcheries.

A planned fish stocking can be disrupted or delayed because of unsafe conditions created by factors including the weather, road and traffic conditions, the number of participant vehicles, access to the water by the stocking truck and officer, and participant conduct. When attending a fish stocking, it's important for everyone to abide by the directions given by the waterways conservation officer (WCO) or his/her designee. In addition:

- Arrive in time to hear the WCO's briefing of safety and stocking instructions.
- Don't help carry fish if you have any health problems.
- Do not park ahead of the stocking procession's lead vehicle or behind the designated tail safety vehicle.
- Keep your vehicle at least 40 feet behind the stocking truck at all times.
- Do not jump ahead of the stocking truck and park in off-road spots that will be used by the truck. Doing so can cause the truck to bypass that stocking location.
- Do not park your vehicle in a manner that obstructs traffic. Park safely off the roadway in a legal manner.
- Carpool with other participants, if possible.
- If you're going to help carry buckets, always off-load the buckets from the back of the truck.
- Fish don't survive long in a bucket, so carry your buckets as quickly as possible from the truck to the water. Bring the bucket back to the truck promptly so that the stocking can continue without delay.
- Don't pour buckets of fish into shallow, muddy or silted areas. Be sure the water is deep enough to prevent the fish from dying because of clogged gills.
- Always stay alert to moving traffic. Keep children under your immediate safe control, and do not stand in traffic lanes while watching or helping to stock.

The Fish & Boat Commission is not liable for any injury to stocking assistants or damage to their vehicles. Please help make fish stockings safe, efficient and enjoyable by always staying safety alert!


photo-Art Michaels

Angler's Notebook by Jerry Bush

Pursue winter steelhead in Lake Erie tributaries when the water is high with diminishing flows. Fish a day or two after a strong rainfall or after large amounts of melting snow run through the creeks. Fast, strong currents often dislodge ice that had formed over frozen pools. If you time trips correctly, you can work a stream's best holes for a few days before the pools freeze again.


photo-Jerry Bush

Contrary to popular belief, stream trout can be caught in winter when the weather cooperates. Try the mouths of streams that empty into lakes or reservoirs that receive winter stockings. Use only enough weight to place your offering on the bottom while preserving a natural drift.

Stream trout feed close to the bottom in winter, and because the fish are lethargic, they seldom move more than a foot to eat. Sometimes you have to bump their noses with an offering to get them to cooperate. Cast repeatedly into any area you think could be holding fish. Be certain you're placing baits right along the bottom, and fish with a short line while keeping your rod high.

Economically priced strap-on cleats can be an invaluable accessory to any pair of winter boots. They prevent falls on the ice by improving traction. Most cleats are inexpensive, and those made of neoprene can be long-lasting and resist accumulation of snow.

A wading staff can be an valuable aid any time an angler is on a stream, but it will be worth more when it could prevent your taking a spill into icy water. Several manufacturers now offer folding staffs made of lightweight but strong composite materials.

Discovery: GRASS SHRIMP in the Monongahela River

by Deborah Weisberg



grass shrimp

photo-David Argent

A tiny bearer of good news was discovered upriver from Pittsburgh last summer when scientists trawling the Monongahela River bottom netted a species of freshwater shrimp. Known as grass shrimp, they are small cousins of the jumbo shrimp found on restaurant menus. They indicate much-improved water quality, according to David Argent, the California University of Pennsylvania (CALU) biologist who led the first-ever benthic, or bottom, trawl of the "Mon," from the West Virginia line to Fayette City, Fayette County. This work was part of a federally funded State Wildlife Grant administered by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission.

Argent captured the 2-inch-long translucent crustaceans at Port Marion on the West Virginia border and at the mouth of Little Redstone Creek, at opposite ends of a 40-mile stretch.

Grass shrimp are known to occur in the Ohio River Watershed in Ohio. Although grass shrimp are native to the Mississippi River Watershed, of which the Mon is a part, Argent thinks that they haven't been this far north, and that they are beginning to expand their range because the Mon, which joins the Allegheny River to form the Ohio River in downtown Pittsburgh, is now healthy enough to support them. "The discoveries show that the Mon has suitable habitat for this species at more than an isolated spot," says Rick Lorson, Commission area fisheries manager for the Monongahela River.

Argent netted just 12 shrimp. Even though he says he might have found more had he been looking for them, the small number suggests that they are new to the scene. They also appear to be pretty much at home, since seven of the shrimp were carrying eggs. Lorson surmised that grass shrimp may have been in the river for five or more years. This idea comes from his work unit having monitored the Mon River's water quality and fish populations. He also points out that the benthic trawl was introduced as a sampling method in Pennsylvania in 2005 by researchers from Missouri. There will likely be more exciting findings from the Three Rivers system as researchers expand this sampling method over the next two years.

The Mon's silty habitat and relatively warm water suit shrimp, which otherwise prefer brackish or estuarial water, Argent says. The Mon's northward flow from West Virginia suggests that the shrimp alternately swam and drifted up to Pennsylvania, although they may have "hitchhiked" on a boat.

Scores of watershed groups and various state and federal agencies have worked hard, especially since the Clean Water Act of 1972, to restore water quality in all of western Pennsylvania's rivers, including the Mon, which historically was the most industrialized and polluted of the Three Rivers. That makes the discovery of the gravid shrimp especially exciting. "They wouldn't be attempting to breed if conditions in the river were that poor," Argent says, "chemically or otherwise."

Another good sign of a healthier Mon was the surprising bounty of Johnny darters Argent captured in the benthic trawl during the summer of 2006 sampling. That survey covered a total of 80 miles out of the Mon River's 91 miles in Pennsylvania. Argent also found many channel darters and silver chubs, which are both Pennsylvania Threatened species.

"Of the 3,000 fish we caught, 1,000 were Johnny darters and 454 were channel darters, which indicate good water quality," Argent says. "We wouldn't have expected to get many Johnny darters 20 feet down in the river, because they're more of a riffle or shallow-pool species."

Argent's sampling is the first of several benthic surveys slated for 2006 and years to come. The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission has awarded State Wildlife Grant federal funding for bottom trawling on the Allegheny River (CALU) and Ohio River (Penn State University) to determine the presence of rare fish and mussel species. The survey will also help the Commission determine further how best to protect these species, and to provide insights into the possible effects on these species of sand and gravel dredging.

The surveys fit the mission of the Fish & Boat Commission's new Three Rivers Ecological Center, established in 2005 to coordinate scientific research on the Monongahela, Allegheny, and Ohio rivers. The Commission's establishment of the Three Rivers Ecological Research Center will help guide projects to these new discoveries and enhance our understanding of these great Pennsylvania resources.

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hoto-Art Michaels

Chain Dam, Easton

Pennsylvania's TROUBLEMAKERS

by Kelly Sharp

A "run-of-the-river dam" is a manmade structure regulated or permitted by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). It is built across a river or stream for the purposes of impounding water where the impoundment at normal flow levels is completely within the banks and all flow passes directly over the entire dam structure within the banks, excluding abutments, to a natural channel downstream. DEP determines if the dam has hydraulic characteristics so that at certain flows persons entering the area immediately below the dam may be caught in the backwash.

There are some 300 dams in the Commonwealth that meet the statutory definition of a run-of-the-river (low-head) dam. These dams are required by law to be marked. However, there are some 2,000 other dams in Pennsylvania not required by law to be marked, and they can also pose a great danger. They may also possess the dangerous hydraulic characteristics of low-head dams.

If you are out on a river or stream for any purpose, you should remember that what may look like a harmless dam can suddenly become dangerous if the water flow changes during heavy rain or in other weather conditions. A dam can create dangerous conditions elsewhere on a waterway, not necessarily in the dam's immediate area.

Recreation on rivers and streams is for the most part a safe and fun outdoor activity. However, low-head dams can be a threat to any boater, angler, wader, and others enjoying the water. The low-head dam, especially under certain flow conditions, is one of the most dangerous. So it's very important that you pay attention to and obey all signs posted at or near the dam. These signs are posted solely for your safety and protection. From downstream, you may not realize the danger until it's too late. From upstream, low-head dams are sometimes difficult to see.

For this reason, "know before you go." Scout river areas where you intend to fish or boat so that you know the locations of dams and can thus avoid them.

In addition, becoming entrapped in the backwash below a dam can be deadly. Anything caught in the backwash below a dam is trapped and recirculated, making escape or rescue difficult, even for those wearing a life jacket.

In certain flow conditions, if you became caught in a low-head dam's backwash, you would be carried to the face of the dam, where water pouring over the dam would wash you under and back beneath the boil. The backwash would carry you again to the dam face. This cycle would continue.

To complicate matters, the base of dams is sometimes loaded with debris, such as tires, logs on the surface, and rocks and steel bars on the bottom. These materials pose an additional threat to a recirculating victim.

To attempt survival, you'd have to go down with the current coming over the dam's face and stay as close to the bottom as possible, trying to get past the crest of the boil before resurfacing. This maneuver is very difficult, and few victims have performed it successfully. Pay attention to warning signs, markers, and buoys, and keep clear of low-head dams.

The PA Fish & Boat Commission takes the dangers of these dams seriously. These dangers at times can develop very quickly with little or no notice.

Low-head dams are periodically inspected to ensure that they are marked in accordance with the Commission's guidelines, and owners are directed to correct any deficiencies found. DEP is the regulatory agency that oversees the Run-of-the-River Dam Program and determines whether or not dams meet the regulatory definition of a run-of-the-river dam. The PA Fish & Boat Commission ensures compliance with the law in making sure that the dams are properly marked.

Kelly Sharp is the PA Fish & Boat Commission's aids-to-navigation coordinator.

2007 OPENING DAYS
Commonwealth Inland Waters

Trout and salmon—April 14

Trout, southeastern PA—March 31

Trout and salmon, extended season—Jan 1 through Feb 28 and Sep 4 through Dec 31

Pike, pickerel, muskellunge—Year-round open season

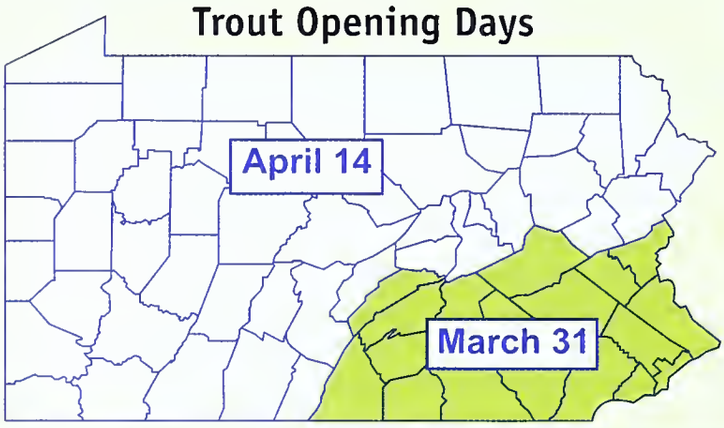
Walleye, sauger—May 5

Bass (largemouth, smallmouth, spotted)—Year-round open season; harvest allowed Jan 1 through April 13 and June 16 through Dec 31

Sunfish, yellow perch, white perch, crappie, catfish, rock bass, suckers, carp, and white bass—Year-round open season

American shad—Year-round open season

Trout Opening Days



2007 FISHING LICENSES

Type of Fishing License or Permit	Age	Cost*
Resident	16-64	$22.00
Senior Resident (Annual)	65 & up	$11.00
Senior Resident (Lifetime)	65 & up	$51.00
National Guard/Armed Forces Reserve (Resident)	16 & up	$ 2.00
Prisoner of War (P.O.W.) (Resident)	16 & up	$ 2.00
Prisoner of War (P.O.W.) (Senior Lifetime)	65 & up	$ 2.00
1-Day Resident**	16 & up	$11.00
Non-Resident (Annual)	16 & up	$52.00
1-Day Tourist***	16 & up	$26.00
3-Day Tourist	16 & up	$26.00
7-Day Tourist	16 & up	$34.00
Trout/Salmon Permit	16 & up	$ 9.00
Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	$ 9.00
Combination Trout-Salmon/Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	$15.00

*includes issuing agent fee
**nat valid April 1-30
***includes all stamps, license nat valid in April

The trout season begins March 31 on all waters in Adams, Berks, Bucks, Chester, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Franklin, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Perry, Philadelphia, Schuylkill, and York counties.

Trout season in the rest of the state opens April 14.

www.fish.state.pa.us

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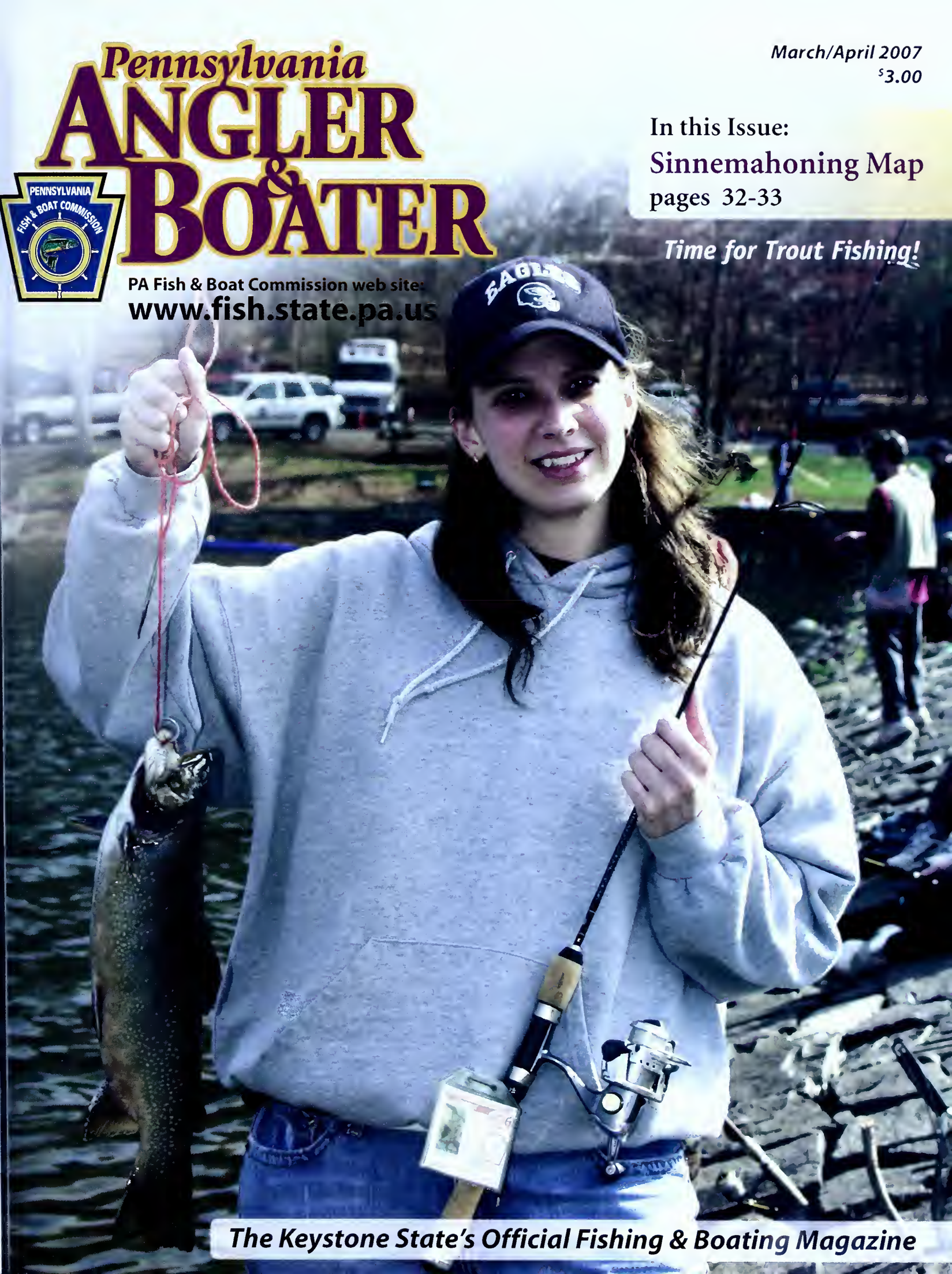
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Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER

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Time for Trout Fishing!

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www.fish.state.pa.us



The Keystone State's Official Fishing & Boating Magazine



PROTECT CONSERVE ENHANCE

Program Directions for the Future



by Douglas J. Austen, Ph.D.
Executive Director
PA Fish & Boat Commission

RESOURCE FIRST
PROTECT • CONSERVE • ENHANCE

On February 7, I provided the annual report of the Fish & Boat Commission's activities to the House Game & Fisheries Committee. This is the main legislative body that provides oversight of the Commission and is generally where legislation affecting our agency is first reviewed before going in front of the full House of Representatives. In addition to highlighting the agency's work during 2006—such as the continuing development of an automated licensing system, exciting new changes to trout fishing, and funding for infrastructure—I also used my time with the committee to discuss program directions for the future. A great deal of my remarks centered around connecting anglers and boaters to the water and families to outdoor activities and how these critical challenges must be successfully addressed.

Even with its wealth of public lands, Pennsylvania is not immune to the trend toward privatizing access to our waterways and expanded posting of private property. As I explained in the last issue of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater,* the implications for fishing are clear: Private lands border 83 percent of our stocked trout waters, about 70 percent of our wild trout waters, and some 59 percent of our class A wild trout waters. The Commission and other partners have already secured access through purchases and fishing easements to 2.1 miles of Lake Erie tributaries through the Lake Erie stamp special fund. However, I explained to the legislators that there is currently no viable funding mechanism for expanding such efforts to the rest of the Commonwealth. Our commissioners and staff will be working on a variety of programs throughout this year to help keep land open to all anglers.

Beyond the need to provide access for sportsmen and women, I also cautioned that more work needs to be done to attract new generations of anglers and boaters. Traditional outdoor activities are simply not engaging youth in the right ways. We don't have enough organized activities in the schools, our teaching methods are often antiquated, we don't have enough family activities that offer well-structured programs for parents and kids, and we're not nearly as visible in the cities as we should be.

To address these concerns, we need new thinking and new revenue for youth education. I renewed the call for funding in the form of an inexpensive fishing license for 12- to 15-year-olds with the money, and



Programs such as non-game management really do need the Commonwealth to step up and financially support the efforts.

the federal dollars that come with it, dedicated to expanding youth programs. The funds would go directly into youth programs—no diversion to pay for general agency operations, and no misdirection of funds to pay for some other unrelated program. All the money for kids, all the time.

The message is clear: We simply cannot continue doing the same things and expect different results. We can't stop the trend of losing kids to video games and other activities if we don't establish the programs that they will find attractive. If we want to offer new programs, we need new funding for clubs, instruction, information, family events—in short, everything that will make Pennsylvania a leader in youth fishing and the development of young people who understand the resource.



photos-Art Michaels

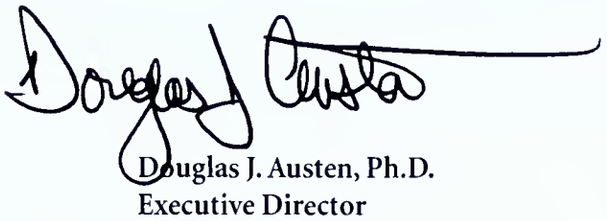
We don't have enough family activities that offer well-structured programs for parents and kids, and we're not nearly as visible in the cities as we should be.

Because this proposal bucks the tradition of not charging 12- to 15-year-olds, there is some resistance. Most people agree that it is not the $5 fee. The legislators were quick to point out that you can barely buy a meal at a fast-food place for that amount. The challenge is putting together the programs that will address the problems, and our staff, the Governor's Youth Council for Hunting, Fishing and Conservation, and many supporting partners and groups have developed a great plan. You can find out more from our web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**. Be sure to take a special look at the video narrated by one of the youth who helped develop the expanded youth program concept. Our staff is also willing to talk to any group that would like more information on the program.

In closing my remarks, I requested that lawmakers examine two other funding-related concerns: Important programs supported by fishing license dollars and watercraft registration fees that aren't directly related to recreational angling or boating, and the current process for establishing license and registration fees. The Commission takes much pride in its efforts to manage reptiles, amphibians, and non-game fish species, and to train emergency responders in water rescue, but general Commonwealth funds may be more appropriate for these programs than using sportsmen's dollars. The Growing Greener funds that we have been receiving for our hatchery upgrades and some dam repairs have been a very welcome source of assistance, and we are thankful for that support. But that will end soon and leave much still to be accomplished. Programs such as water rescue and non-game management really do need the Commonwealth to step up and financially support their efforts.

As most of you might also know, after our much-needed license fee increase in 2005, the number of license-buyers dropped by over 9 percent. We recovered a little last year, but the 29 percent cost increase in the resident license as well as increases in other categories that came in 2005 took their toll. It was clear that the historically lengthy time between license and registration fee updates, nine years in the last cycle, leads to inevitably sizable cost increases and sales declines. What other product that we purchase keeps the exact same price for nine years? We need to find a better way to set the license prices so that we don't relive the downside of major fee changes in the future.

I look forward to working with the members of the administration, the legislature, and you, the sportsmen and women of the Commonwealth in tackling these matters. If you're interested in learning more about my report, the full text of the speech is available on the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**. Also available on the Commission's web site is a comprehensive annual report detailing strategic initiatives advanced in 2006, financial information, and program-specific statistics. I encourage you to spend some time with the annual report because it catalogs how your money is spent and what is returned to you in programs and services.



Douglas J. Austen, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Casting Around

Early birds


French Creek, Chester County

This year, most of us have a chance to be early birds with the trout season. New regulations will open the trout season on March 31 in 18 southeastern counties, a few weeks before the traditional opening day in the rest of the state. The traditional opening day this year in the rest of Pennsylvania is April 14. This issue's theme is "Time for Trout Fishing!" and items in this issue can help you be a successful early bird, whether you start at the new legal time in the 18 southeastern counties or on the regular opening day.

On **page 10**, regular contributor John Allen suggests which flies and lures to try on opening day and early in the season, and on **page 12**, regular contributor Linda Steiner proposes some places where you can get in on some really early trout fishing (like right now) and which tactics can help you be most successful. Be sure also to read this issue's "Cast Away" column on **page 7** for more information on where to find great early season trout fishing in southcentral and southeastern Pennsylvania. Furthermore, Sinnemahoning State Park, Cameron County, is deep in the middle of the Pennsylvania Wilds. Read about its fishing and boating opportunities in the article on **page 31** by Laurel Anders.

On **page 8**, Carl Haensel spells out some very basic information on how to select flies and how to use them. This material is great for new fly anglers and it provides a quick review for more experienced anglers. This issue's "Angler Profiles" column on **page 16** spotlights expert fly angler Dave Rothrock and reveals some of his success secrets for fishing nymphs.

For more on flies, regular contributor Charles R. Meck provides step-by-step details on how to tie a Hornberg Streamer on **page 18**, and on **page 19** in "Your Fishing Field Guide," Carl Haensel explains how to fish this classic fly.

If you keep trout, don't miss this issue's "Fishin' from the Kitchen" column on **page 58**. Author Wayne Phillips shows us how to make delicious smoked trout and scrambled egg crepes.

If you want to be an early bird shad angler this season, you're going to need George Magaro Sr. to help you steady your boat and fine-tune your boat positioning in the Delaware's swift flow. Read about his ingenious anchoring strategy on **page 15**.

Because spring will be here shortly, see the "Pennsylvania Amphibians & Reptiles" column on **page 20**. Author Andrew L. Shiels highlights one of Pennsylvania's harbingers of spring, the spring peeper.

Lastly, check out the "Cast & Caught" column in this issue on **page 64** to anticipate the kind of success you can have this season. See you on the water!—*Art Michaels, Editor.*

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March/April 2007
Volume 76 Number 2

Time for Trout Fishing!

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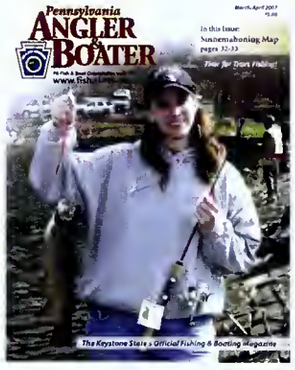
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On the cover

This issue's front cover shows Nicole Czarnecki with part of her opening day catch at Scotts Run Lake, French Creek State Park, Berks County. Photo by Art Michaels.



MAIL

Missing "bite"

I caught a 16-inch brown trout that rose to a dry Caddis on the First Fork of Sinnemahoning Creek last October. When I netted it, I noticed a spot of flesh missing about the size of a quarter. The "bite" was about 3/8-inch deep out of its side. Except for the missing spot, the fish had great color and gave me a good fight before I released it. What could have caused the missing flesh—a great blue heron?—*Paul Kropinak, Kittanning, PA.*



Brown trout with "bite" out of its back.

We sometimes find similar marks on fish captured during our stream examinations. We typically find this kind of mark on larger fish, such as the one in your photograph. I surmise that some type of bird caused the mark on your fish, because fish provide a regular part of the diet for a variety of bird species such as herons, kingfishers, and ospreys. In this case, a bird was probably looking for a meal but found that this fish was too large for it to handle.—*R. Thomas Greene, Coldwater Unit Leader.*

Old tackle

In the March/April 2006 issue you included an article called "A Sucker Fisherman Forever," by Dave Thompson. I wanted to thank you for including the photograph of Mr. Everhart, the article's subject. It shows the many years of true love for the pastime we all enjoy. As a former deputy waterways conservation officer, I have seen many anglers over the years, but very few with the tackle that is pictured in such wonderful condition. The rod and reel combo Mr. Everhart is holding reminds me of one of my first outfits in the late 1950s. I won't take a guess at the brand, but wow, what a memory. Thanks for reminding us all that fishing goes well beyond 75 mph bass boats and thousands of dollars in gear. I would also enjoy seeing an article in *PA&B* that covers some of the old tackle combos.—*John McWilliams, Spring City, PA.*

Mon River success

I had excellent success fishing the Monongahela River near Brownsville last November. I've been fishing one spot from shore on several occasions and have caught fish on every trip. I exclusively fish with creek-caught chubs and suckers. During my last three trips I've caught some big smallmouth bass, saugers and walleyes.

I've been fishing the Allegheny River at Locks 2 and 3 for the past 20 years and only occasionally fished the Mon. But last year was unbelievable. On Father's Day last year, my 11-year-old daughter caught at least 15 smallmouths from 14 inches to 20 inches at this same spot. The action was so hot that I couldn't get my own line in the water. Throughout the summer, both flathead and channel cats were hitting well with the largest about 14 pounds. Most were in the 6-pound to 8-pound range.

Having been born and raised near Brownsville, it's fantastic to know that the river is such a productive fishery. While I'll never reveal my spot to anyone, please pass the word that the Mon is alive and doing well.—*John Gregor, Braddock, PA.*

We are pleased to hear of your success fishing the Monongahela River near Brownsville. We have heard many reports like yours from the Monongahela River over the last several years. These reports include information on fishes from bass, walleyes and sauger to white bass and hybrid striped bass, and channel catfish, flathead catfish and freshwater drum. You will probably also recall that the bulk of the catch in the July 2005 Bassmaster Classic came from the Mon River. It is true that historically the Allegheny and Ohio rivers were better places to go for good fishing, but that idea no longer holds up.

We completed extensive fish survey work on the Mon River in 2003 to document the fishery's status. Our work took place at the Braddock, Maxwell, and Grays Landing locks and dams. The 2003 sampling of the Mon River provided a healthy fish population picture. We compared our 2003 Mon River data to averages from the lower Allegheny River and Ohio River. This comparison showed that the Mon River in 2003 had the highest numbers for smallmouth bass and sauger, and it was close behind the lower Allegheny River for walleyes.

Fishing opportunities are currently considered abundant and varied for this river for many species. A forage fish base of many species is also now available in the river to sustain these populations. The total number of fish species in the Mon River at Maxwell has steadily increased over the last 35 years from two in 1968 to 26 in 2003. Fish populations will continue to vary annually based on environmental conditions, but anglers are targeting them at increasing levels. Efforts must continue toward pollution abatement in this watershed.

We echo your statement that the Mon is alive and doing well!—*Rick Lorson, Area 8 Fisheries Manager.*

Cast Away

Southcentral, Southeast PA for the Early Opener

by Art Michaels

Fish & Boat Commission area fisheries managers Mike Kaufmann and Dave Miko have specific suggestions on where to fish the early opening day in 18 southeastern counties, and how to score.

"Big Spring Creek, Cumberland County, offers 2.3 miles of limestone spring creek waters for great fishing," says Dave Miko. "Big Spring Creek gets muddy only after heavy rain, so it provides clear-water fishing when many other streams are muddy." Drift live bait here.

Dave recommends Dauphin County's Clark Creek, which is 24 miles long with a 2.4-mile Catch-and-Release, Fly-Fishing-Only section. "This stream offers the opportunity to catch brook and brown trout in the stocked section that runs through State Game Lands 211," Dave says. "The stream offers productive fishing in low, clear water because the relatively fast currents force fish to make quick decisions about offerings. Live bait and spinners work well here."

Dave thinks that Little Marsh Creek's 7 miles in Adams County are also a good spot. He says this low-gradient stream offers good fishing in high, muddy water because flows won't be so fast that they make fishing overly difficult. The stream is stocked with brook and brown trout. Try live bait, small crankbaits and paste baits.

Dave picks Cocolamus Creek, 10 miles long in Juniata County, as another good spot. "Stocked with brown and rainbow trout, this stream should offer anglers good opening day and early season catches," Dave says. "This low-gradient stream provides ample opportunities for both high-water and clear-water conditions."

Area 6 Fisheries Manager Mike Kaufmann also offers excellent advice for the southeastern counties. "In muddy conditions or cold water conditions, fish with bait," he says. "Particularly good in muddy water are corn, paste baits and worms."

"In clearer water conditions, try Otter Creek, York County. It's scenic with a long stocked section," Mike says. "Ridley Creek, Delaware County, in Ridley Creek State Park, is scenic in portions of the park with some walk-in fishing, but it tends to be crowded." Mike says it might be best to wait until late morning or early afternoon to begin fishing if crowds are expected in the case of good weather. Water temperature isn't usually a problem in early spring.

Mike suggests the Little Schuylkill River, Schuylkill County. "There are many opportunities in several stocked sections here," he says. Mike says that the Little Schuylkill River is good throughout the spring in all sections, with the Port Clinton section warming earlier than the rest. The Little Schuylkill tends to run cold in early spring, so bait is a better choice outside of the special-regulation area.

"Try the Ontelaunee and Maiden creeks complex, Berks and Lehigh counties," Mike says. "These streams are long and easily accessible from PA Route 143, which parallels both streams. They offer small to large water with good midday hatches in late March and early April, and the area is scenic farm country with room to fish."

Leaser Lake, another suggestion, is close by if stream fishing isn't good. Under low flow conditions, though, Mike says to avoid Maiden Creek.

Mike also suggests the White Clay Creek complex, southern Chester County, which includes White Clay Creek, Middle Branch White Clay Creek, and East Branch White Clay Creek. "As a group, these streams offer miles of fishing," he says. "The water temperature is usually not a problem in early spring."

Mike says that in cold water conditions, all of these streams may provide better fishing in midday and in the afternoon, and that an added bonus is that they'll be less crowded than at 8 a.m.

Both Mike and Dave suggest heading out to one of the trout-stocked lakes or streams that are downstream of a lake if this spring is wet with very high flows. Review the list of trout-stocked lakes in the 2007 *Pennsylvania Fishing Summary* or on the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**.



French Creek, Chester County

photo-Art Michaels

A FLY ANGLER'S INTRODUCTION TO PICKING A PATTERN

by Carl Haensel



photos by the author

It's the morning of your first fishing trip on a new trout stream. You've just driven three hours, and you've pulled off at a good-looking spot next to a bridge. You begin rigging your gear and preparing to head down to the stream.

Each fly angler in this situation faces a challenge—which fly to use? Many anglers have a favorite fly pattern or two, a "go-to" fly. There are times, however, when one fly pattern may be better than another. Consider this series of factors that will lead you through the steps of picking the best fly for the situation.

Before you start picking your fly in the field, there are some basics that you will need to learn. Start by learning about the prey that predatory fish eat: Insects, crustaceans and fish. If you want additional information on these organisms and their life cycles, check the information on mayflies, caddisflies, stoneflies, crayfish, baitfish and many others on the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**.

Fly Selection Rules

- Don't decide on a fly until you get to the stream. Wait to rig your rod until you sit down at the stream and make some observations.
- Use a net. Remember to examine insects and minnows carefully. Regardless of the types of insects or minnows you might find on a stream, a small seine or fine-mesh net is indispensable for examining them. There are even some nets on the market that slip over your landing net.
- Bring at least three flies of a pattern to the stream. One to use, one to use after that big fish breaks off the first one, and one to lend to your buddy. Leave a spare fly at home, too.
- Believe in your fly. If you don't, take a break and consider your selections. If you don't believe in the pattern that you're fishing, you're not as likely to catch as many fish.
- It's not all about the fly. Presentation of your fly accounts for a huge part of your success. If the first 10 patterns don't catch the fish, the next 10 won't catch it, either. Move along and try for another fish, or change your presentation completely.—*CH.*

Step 1: Where will you fish?

If you are going to fish for brook trout in a mountain stream, your box should hold different flies than a box for brown trout in a limestone spring creek. As a general rule, trout that live in more productive water, like spring creeks, are more finicky about which flies they will take. There are many varieties of food available to the trout, and they often are selective about what they eat. In those types of streams anglers should fish flies that closely resemble natural foods found there. In less fertile water, such as most of Pennsylvania's "mountain" trout streams, there is not as much food for trout to eat. In these streams, trout are more likely to respond to a fly that doesn't closely match a prey item that is actually found there.



If the water is a little bit cloudy, high or fast, try using a fly in a beadhead version to add a little flash to it. It won't look entirely natural, but the trout may just take notice.

Step 2: When are you going?

To select the right fly, there are seasons and cycles that you must consider. A smart first step is to find a local or regional hatch chart that will tell you which mayflies, caddisflies and stoneflies are hatching. There are insect hatches, especially mayflies, that occur only at a specific time of the year.

Step 3: What time of day will you fish?

The time of day and weather play an important role in your fly selection. What do you think the fish will be doing in the next few hours when you start fishing? Will the grasshoppers in the meadow be warm enough to be active in the afternoon? Will there be a mayfly hatch in the evening? If so, the mayfly nymphs that are about to hatch might be active. Consider that an evening rainstorm or other inclement weather that has caused stream levels to rise can stop or delay an insect hatch. Furthermore, extremely hot weather or low stream levels can cause insect and trout feeding activity to occur primarily in low light levels and even during the night.

Step 4: Stop and watch.

One of the most important things you can do at a trout stream is to stop, wait and watch. Look for information in the water, the air, and last night's spider webs. Insects, minnows and fish moving around will give you clues to which fly to pick. Plan to spend at least five or 10 minutes observing on every fishing trip, even on your favorite stream.

Step 5: Put the pieces together.

None of the elements on a trout stream works independently. You must consider all the variables. If there are mayflies in the air and the trout are making splashy rises, take a closer look. Try to see if the mayflies in the air are the same ones that the fish are eating on the water. Then search your fly box to find something that matches them. You're in luck if you've tied some flies for the hatch that you're now seeing firsthand. Don't plan to use dry flies if you don't see any rising fish. While not a "hard and fast" rule, this strategy will help make your angling more productive, especially on Pennsylvania's limestone trout streams.

Trout can consume more than 80 percent of their food from underwater sources. If no insects are hatching, turn over rocks in the stream and look at what's on the underside to figure out what lives there. If you're going to fish nymphs, you don't always need to know an organism's Latin name. Just flip over a rock. If you see little crawly dark-brown things that look to be about size 16, tie on a fly that looks like that, such as a size 16 Pheasant Tail Nymph. If the water is a little bit cloudy, high or fast, try using a fly in a beadhead version to add a little flash to it. It won't look entirely natural, but the trout may just take notice.

If you're fishing for big trout, streamers can make the difference. Wild trout that exceed 16 inches in length eat a significantly larger percentage of minnows and other small fish. Feed them what they want—a streamer that looks like a minnow. Try using a small seine to take a closer look at the kinds of minnows in the stream.

The Beginner's Fly Box

Unsure about which flies to bring out to the field with you? Here's a short list of flies that will provide you with something to use in many situations that you will encounter in Pennsylvania. These flies are generic patterns that don't mimic one specific insect or minnow perfectly, but they do an adequate job imitating several different ones.

Fly Pattern	Size
Blue-Wing Olive	14-16
Adams	12-16
Adams Parachute	12-16
Tan Elk Hair Caddis	12-16
Beadhead Pheasant Tail Nymph	4-18
Pheasant Tail Nymph	14-18
Beadhead Hare's Ear Nymph	12-16
Hare's Ear Nymph	12-16
Olive Woolly Bugger	8-10
Black Woolly Bugger	8-10



None of the elements on a trout stream works independently. You must consider all the variables.

Opening Day

Flies and Lures

by John Allen

With more anglers on the water during the opening day than any other day during the year, the question comes up, "What should I use?" It seems like every year as the first day approaches, I hear those words, especially from fly anglers who are just learning the ropes. Here are my suggestions on the hatches to look for, flies to use (surface and subsurface), and spin-fishing lures that I would typically use on opening day.

Flies

During this time of year, hatches that support dry-fly fishing can be intermittent throughout the day because the water temperatures still vary greatly from morning to afternoon. In the new March opening day in the southeastern counties, you expect to see Blue-Winged Olives in sizes 16 to 18 and I ittle Black Stoneflies in size 16. You can also expect to see size 20 to 26 Midge hatches, but less experienced anglers will probably want to steer away from working this hatch.



photo-John Allen

The best hatches will typically occur as the water temperatures reach their warmest levels of the day.

During the April opening day in the rest of the state, anglers can expect to see Olive Caddises in sizes 14 to 16 and Hendricksons in size 14, along with Blue-Winged Olives and Midges. In both openers, the best hatches will typically occur in the early afternoon as the water temperatures reach their warmest levels of the day. But during the April opener, some bugs will be active in the mornings and evenings.

Nymphs

During the opening day, most of the action is going to be below the surface with nymphs and streamers. The nymphs you would typically use that consistently catch the most fish, especially when water levels are normal, are the San Juan worms in pink, red and chartreuse in sizes 10 to 16, eggs in chartreuse, orange, pink and yellow in sizes 10 to 14, Sucker Spawn in pink, yellow, orange and chartreuse in sizes 14 to 16, and Green Weenies in sizes 12 to 16.

I find that when the water is low and clear, these flies work with less efficiency than if the water were higher and somewhat stained. When the water is low and clear, more natural flies work better, like a Hare's Ear (with or without a beadhead) in sizes 12 to 16, Pheasant Tails (with or without a beadhead), Copper Johns in green, copper and red in sizes 12 to 16, Prince Nymphs in sizes 12 to 16, and Caddis Larvae in yellow and green in sizes 10 to 14. However, these flies can also produce in the higher water conditions.

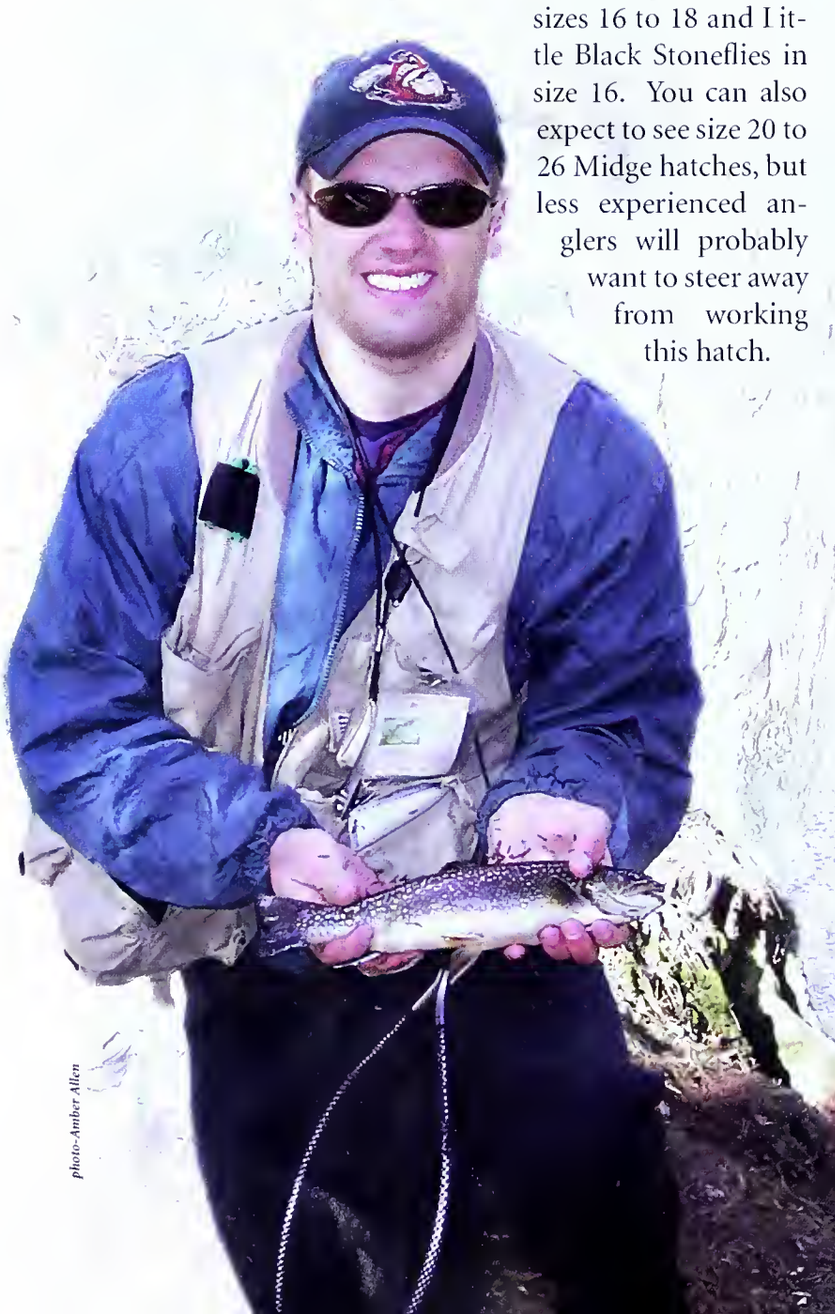


photo-Amber Allen

I like to use spinners ranging from 1/16-ounce to 3/16-ounce, depending on the water's flow. Usually the lighter you can get away with, the better, because the last thing you want to do is get stuck on the bottom every other cast.

In low water conditions, the rig with the least weight, lightest line, and smallest fly usually results in the most fish caught. When the water is more normal and off-color, you can get away with a bigger fly, heavier line, and some added weight to help the offering move more steadily with the water's flow.


photo-John Allen

If you're tying your own streamers, or if you are having someone make them for you, make sure that a little tinsel or flash is added to the fly. This addition will go a long way to capture the attention of the fish quicker.

Streamers

Streamers that you would usually use include Woolly Buggers in black, olive, white, brown, gold and silver in sizes 8 to 12, minnow streamers in white, olive and gray in sizes 8 to 10, Mickey Finns in sizes 10 to 14, Muddler Minnows in natural deer hair color and olive in sizes 8 to 12, small Clouser Minnows in chartreuse/white, brown/white and other natural color combinations in sizes 8 to 10, and Thunderhead Minnows in brown/white, black/white and gray/white in sizes 8 to 10.

If you're tying your own streamers, or if you are having someone make them for you, make sure that a little tinsel or flash is added to the fly. This addition will go a long way to capture the attention of the fish quicker.

I like to work these flies in three different ways to produce strikes. First is the downstream retrieve with a strip, pause, strip, pause retrieve. I find this ploy works best with flashier flies. Next is dead drifting, where you weigh down the fly so that it drifts with the flow of the current like a nymph. The third method is a combination of the first two. Cast the fly upstream and let it drift past you. Then strip it back. All of these methods work well, but the first method is most efficient for the more aggressive fish typically found on the first day.

The style of fly-fishing you use is up to what you feel most comfortable with and what is producing fish. I usually like to start the morning off with a flashy streamer and work it until the fish don't hit it as much. Then I switch to nymphs or more natural-looking streamers to pick up the more timid fish. If I see a hatch occurring with rising trout, I switch to dry flies to pick up some trout on the surface.

Spin-fishing

When it comes to opening day artificial lure spin-fishing, I like to use inline spinners and jigging spoons. I like spinners that have flashy blades in gold, silver and white. After that, the color has a lot to do with preference and water color. A rule of thumb I use is that the dirtier the water, the brighter the spinner color, and the clearer the water, the darker the color.

I like to use spinners ranging from 1/16-ounce to 3/16-ounce, depending on the water's flow. Usually the lighter you can get away with, the better, because the last thing you want to do is get stuck on the bottom every other cast. I like to make quick pauses during the retrieve just to change things up and try something that might help entice additional strikes.

My favorite artificial lure is a jigging spoon in gold, white, silver and chartreuse from 1/16-ounce to 1/8-ounce. There are two methods I like to use when fishing them that I have found produce the most strikes. First is the more aggressive motion, where you hold the rod low, give a jerk to the side, pause and let the lure fall a little, and then jerk again. I usually don't let the lure fall too much, maybe a 1- or 2-second pause at most. This usually produces quick hits and often results in missed or poorly hooked fish because the strike is so quick.

The other method is much less aggressive and usually results in a better hookup. You retrieve by jigging the rod up and then bringing it down and reeling the slack on the way down. Then repeat. Don't let the lure fall too long. It can easily slip under a rock because of the spoon's erratic motion. Most times you'll feel the fish on when you bring the rod back up for the next jigging. I prefer using a light-action rod when using these techniques because ultralights don't always have enough backbone for a 1/8-ounce jig.

CATCH-AND

They call it "LDR." LDR means "Long Distance Release." I've heard the expression mostly from fly-fishermen, as in, "How'd you do today?" "Caught three and had a couple of LDRs."

LDR is a short way of saying that the fish was on long enough that it wasn't "a hit and a miss," but that the angler never got the trout to hand or in the net. The trout was "released" at a distance, a self-induced release on the fish's part. The angler didn't mean to let it go right then, but he can still say he fooled the fish into biting, can't he?

Some anglers like to consider LDRs as catches when tallying their angling success. For others, catch-and-release doesn't "count" unless they touch the fish and then let it go, perhaps to play LDR with another angler.

However you like to do your catch-and-release trouting, you have many options in Pennsylvania. The Fish & Boat Commission offers three catch-and-release programs: Catch-and-Release, Fly-Fishing-Only (CRFFO); Catch-and-Release (C&R); and Catch-and-Release, All-Tackle. The good news is that these waters are located all across the state. The better news is that there is one near you and they make excellent destinations for long weekends or vacations. The best news is that because anglers at catch-and-release areas return trout to the stream, any time you visit you'll have something to fish for.

One of the first streams in Pennsylvania to be officially designated Fly-Fishing-Only is not far from my home in Venango County. Little Sandy Creek was put under Fly-Fishing-Only regulations in the 1950s. Today the 1.3-mile stream section is in the CRFFO program, joining more than 30 other such areas in the state.

CRFFO

On CRFFO projects, fishing must be done with artificial flies and fly-fishing equipment. All trout caught must be returned to the water. The special-regulation areas are open year-round from an hour before sunrise to an hour after sunset each day. Wading is permitted unless otherwise posted, and a current trout/salmon permit is required.

At Little Sandy Creek, the Oil Creek Chapter of Trout Unlimited, partnering with the Fish & Boat Commission and others, has done decades of stream improvement and fish habitat work to make angling better. The Commission stocks the stream and the Oil Creek and Neshannock chapters of Trout Unlimited provide supplemental trout through the latter's participation in the Cooperative Nursery Program. Wild brook and brown trout are also in the project.

Little Sandy may be my neighborhood CRFFO water, but I have sampled other streams in the program during multiple-day vacations, as well as on "drive-by" short afternoons. My favorite? Although it feels like giving away a "secret spot," White Deer Creek, on the border of Centre and Union counties, is listed in the *Pennsylvania Fishing Summary* for all to see.

White Deer Creek was a "find" for me when a friend said that he often stops there when traveling I-80 and has a little extra time. I began doing this as well, turning off the highway at Exit 199 and taking the narrow road that parallels the stream. The 3.1 miles of White Deer in the CRFFO program offer both stocked and wild trout. In many places the stream is far enough off the road that the fishing feels "back in," although returning to the car is actually a short uphill walk. You can be on I-80 resuming your drive in minutes.

Falling Spring Branch, in Franklin County, lies diagonally across the state from where I live, so its 2.5 miles in the CRFFO program became the destination of a getaway that lasted several days. Falling Spring Branch is one of Pennsylvania's "storied" trout waters, with a legendary angling past, as well as current challenges and successes.



Cherry Run, Union County, Catch-and-Release regulations.

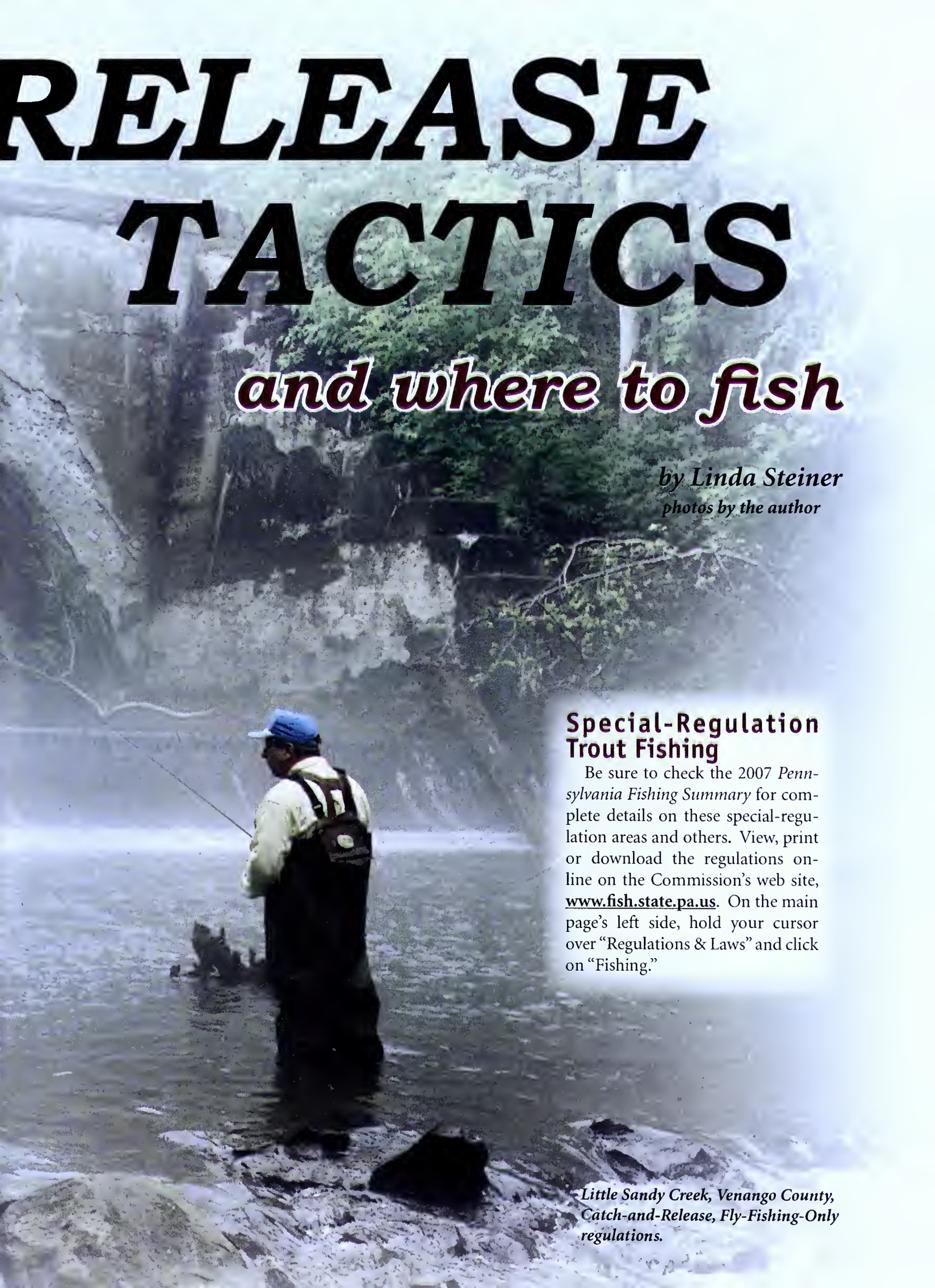
RELEASE TACTICS

and where to fish

by Linda Steiner
photos by the author

Special-Regulation Trout Fishing

Be sure to check the 2007 *Pennsylvania Fishing Summary* for complete details on these special-regulation areas and others. View, print or download the regulations online on the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**. On the main page's left side, hold your cursor over "Regulations & Laws" and click on "Fishing."



Little Sandy Creek, Venango County, Catch-and-Release, Fly-Fishing-Only regulations.

The Falling Spring Chapter of Trout Unlimited, with partner organizations, businesses, local communities and government agencies, including the Fish & Boat Commission, has been working for years on the stream, as its environs change from predominantly agricultural to increasingly urban. Thanks to their efforts, Falling Spring Branch's CRFFO section remains a remarkable place to fish, especially for the unusual treat of wild rainbow trout.

I also recommend Bushkill Creek's 6-plus miles in the program, on the Resica Falls Scout Reservation property, in Monroe County. When you go, stop at the entry building and let them know you're there to fish, and walk in to the project water. If you have never fished the waterfall-studded, tannin-toned waters of the Poconos, this is a good representational sample. But don't expect to fish alone.

Then there's the more than 4-mile CRFFO section of Indiana County's Little Mahoning Creek. This stream hosts a surprising fishery in an area whose lands and waters are still coming back from a coal-mining past. Another personal favorite is Slate Run in Lycoming and Tioga counties. Be prepared to negotiate the area's steep mountainsides if you want to get away from the crowd in the 7-mile special-regulation stretch. This beautiful stream, although remote, is no secret.



Releasing fish unharmed takes forethought, preparation and fast action.

And if you haven't been there yet, you have to fish one-mile-long "Fisherman's Paradise" at Spring Creek, in Centre County, at least once in your life. The section at the Bellefonte State Fish Hatchery is in the CRFFO program.

C&R

C&R trout angling in Pennsylvania isn't limited to those who choose to fly-fish. More than a dozen streams are in the C&R program. This program has rules similar to those of CRFFO, and anglers can use spinning gear and artificial lures such as spinners, plugs and lures. In other words, no bait is allowed.

Among the C&R streams I have enjoyed are, starting in eastern Pennsylvania, Toms Creek, in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. There I fished more on my knees, from the bank, than on my feet, to keep a low silhouette along the small stream. Hickory Run, in the state park of the same name, offers almost 3 miles of C&R fishing before emptying into the brawling Lehigh River. The lower section is especially secluded.

Cross Fork and Young Womans creeks have C&R areas that I often hit when I'm on a fishing vacation in Potter and Clinton counties. Although they are accessed readily by rural roads, traffic is so light, they feel like they're backcountry. Cherry Run, in Union County, is close-quarters C&R fishing in the rhododendron and mountain laurel, giving a wilderness-like experience. Its access is at one road crossing near the lower end. The rest is inviting hike-in on public land.

Here in western Pennsylvania, the West Branch of Caldwell Creek, in Crawford County, has a C&R project, the closest to my home. The stream is a tributary to Caldwell Creek, which is in the CRFFO program. The West Branch has about 3.5 miles of C&R water, but it becomes quite small upstream.

Catch-and-Release All-Tackle

A third type of "reel them in and let them go" fishing does allow bait, as well as flies and lures. These are the Catch-and-Release, All-Tackle areas. Four stream sections are currently in the program, on the Little Juniata River, Spring Creek, Valley Creek (check Valley Forge National Historical Park's special bait restrictions), and the Clarion River.

Whatever their fishing tackle restriction, all of the designated catch-and-release waters throughout the state have something in common. Trout survive in many of these streams year-round, so putting them back instead of creeling them makes sense. It preserves the resource and keeps the fishing good.

The catching part of C&R is relatively easy. Each angler has a preference of fly, lure or bait. Releasing the fish unharmed takes forethought, preparation and fast action. Few trout get the no-human-touch treatment of an LDR release. Mostly we reel them in the whole way, admire them, and then remove the hook.

How to do this? Although barbed and barbless hook adherents can argue their "points," I prefer to crimp the barbs or buy hooks without barbs. By using these hooks, I often don't have to handle the fish at all. I just latch onto the hook shaft with the jaws of my forceps, which you can readily purchase in tackle shops, and back out the point quickly. I use small hooks, mostly size 16, so if I must clip the line and leave the hook in the fish, or if the line breaks, the trout won't be unduly affected.

As another gentle releasing technique, I try not to lift the trout clear of the water while unhooking it. If you must lift the fish, support it in a hand or net and don't squeeze it. If the trout's teeth aren't too big, I "lip hold" it, as I would a bass, with my thumb and fore or middle finger. This prevents the fish's struggling, while allowing its torso to stay submerged, as I unhook it.

Setting the hook quickly also helps keep the trout from swallowing the hook or embedding the hook in its easily bleeding tongue or gills. Instead, the hook usually sinks into the corner or some other fleshy edge of the mouth, and the fish can be released unharmed easily. Of course, the fast uptake of the rod may mean more "LDRs," but they still count as catches, right?

Swinging Your Boat for Shad

by George Magaro Sr.

Through my years of shad fishing from a boat, I have devised a technique that puts you just where you want to be, especially if you're trying to position your boat in or near a part of the channel without repeatedly motoring up to reposition your anchor.

This technique helps when you're around other boats, a situation that doesn't allow you to motor up and re-anchor because of the position of the other boats behind you.

Begin with safety considerations. When fishing any river you need at least 100 feet of rope, depending on the river currents and depths. Remember that you need 7 feet of anchor line for every 1 foot of depth. Learning how to read the water and the channel's current directions is important because the current will swing your boat in another direction that you don't want to be in. Using my technique prevents this and helps you place yourself precisely where you want to be—over the fish.

Start with your anchor rope. Put a 30- to 36-inch section of heavy duty tow chain on the end and attach the anchor using a shackle. You will need another 25 feet of rope with a figure-eight knot on the end where you will attach an aluminum carabiner with a locking device. The device that you will be putting on your anchor line can be a climbing figure eight device, a welded "D" ring, or a welded "O" ring.

Next, most boats come with just one front cleat, but with this technique you will need two cleats, one on each side of the bow. Position each side cleat at about the widest part of the boat's bow. If your boat has a windshield, align the cleats to the front of the windshield. You will want to make sure to use a backing plate when attaching these cleats. Don't rely on the screws alone to hold down the cleat. Boats with side cleats placed by the manufacturer are designed for docking, not anchoring. Don't take the chance of ripping one off your boat.

After anchoring your boat and drifting back, I have found it better to engage the motor to slow the boat's motion and give the anchor a chance to grab the bottom, especially in faster river currents. When you feel that your anchor has grabbed the bottom, drift back to the spot where you want to be and hold the boat in that position by wrapping the rope on the forward cleat. Taking your "figure eight," "D " ring, or "O" ring, form a loop in the anchor line, insert the loop into your device, fold the bend of the rope over the device, and snug it up.

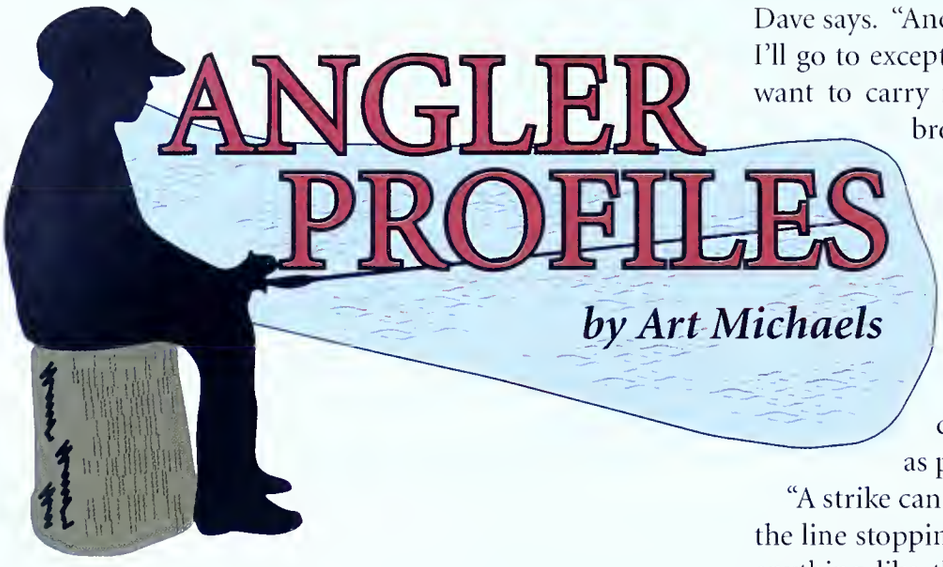
Now take your 25-foot rope section with the carabiner attached to the figure-eight knot and clip the carabiner to the device on the anchor line. Unsecure the anchor line from the forward cleat and drop back into your position. Reattach your anchor line first to the forward cleat and see how your boat sets in the current. Leave the other line loose and attach it to one of the side cleats for now. You are now set up to swing your boat in either direction, if you need to do so.

Using you depthfinder to see where you're located in the channel or its slope, you will then see the direction in which you have to swing your boat. If you don't have a fish/depth finder, when you see that you are catching fish only on one side of the boat, you will know it's time to swing the boat.

To swing your boat, tighten the 25-foot rope section until the boat swings out and away from your main anchor line. You will find that your boat can be moved up to 5 to 8 feet away from your original anchor point. Placing the rope on the right cleat, facing the bow, pushes the boat to the left, and vice-versa. Make these moves in small increments until you reach the desired new position.

This technique can be used to slide into position between other boats without worrying the current will carry you into another boat alongside.

photo-Art Michaels



Dave Rothrock: Secrets of Fishing Nymphs

Dave Rothrock, who lives in Jersey Shore, Lycoming County, is a self-taught fly-fishing expert, fishing and casting instructor, and guide who's been fly-fishing since the mid-1960s. The wealth of fly-fishing know-how he shares can help any angler improve his fly-fishing skills and ability to catch trout.

In addition to fishing in Pennsylvania, Dave's fly-fishing experience includes elsewhere in the United States and outside the country. "I've fished in New York, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Maine and Michigan, and in Austria, Slovenia and Canada," Dave says. "I've hosted fly-fishing trips to Austria for years."

Dave admits that he fishes dry flies and nymphs more than any other offering, but he adapts his techniques and offerings to whatever he thinks will catch fish—nymphs, dries, streamers and terrestrials. Dave focused these comments on nymph fishing.

"If I'm on a stream and I see no surface activity and the water is in good shape, I typically try nymphs first," Dave says. "Even in ultra-low water, you can catch fish on nymphs."

To determine which nymphs to try, Dave picks up rocks and looks at what's there. "This investigating can save a lot of experimentation," he says. "You find out what's most prominent and then you start using nymphs that suggest what the trout are likely to see."

Dave's general nymph arsenal includes a Pheasant Tail Nymph and variations of that pattern like a Beadhead Pheasant Tail and a Pheasant Tail Flashback in sizes 12 to 20. depending on the size of the critters he uncovers.

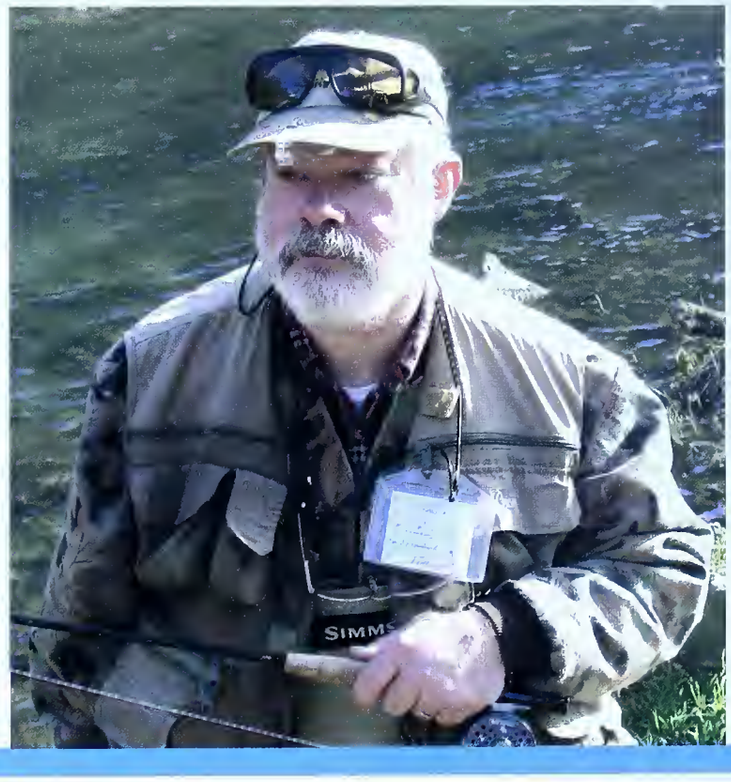
"The best strategy is to fish nymphs that suggest the size, color and shape of the natural food items in the stream," Dave says. "And I won't have a lot of generic patterns that I'll go to except for these four basic patterns: You always want to carry nymphs that are blackish-brown, yellow-brown, olive-brown and reddish-brown. Those colors generally cover the great majority of nymphs that live in our streams."

To fish nymphs, Dave usually casts upstream to achieve a dead drift and to present the nymph at the trout's level in a natural manner. Then he strips the line in according to the current speed. He does his best to eliminate slack line as much as possible.

"A strike can appear as any abnormality in the drift, like the line stopping or speeding up or moving to one side—anything like that," Dave says. "Most times trout don't have to do much at all to take a nymph. Your offering may pass right in their feeding lane, but even if it's off to the side, all they have to do is move over to intercept, and it's pretty much no different most times from their just catching a nymph on the stream bottom. So it's important to react to any abnormality in the drift."

Dave says he likes to work nymphs so that they bounce along the bottom. "You want the nymph to drift just a couple of inches above the stream bottom," Dave says. "Obviously, all stream bottoms aren't the same, but if you make a cast and the fly sinks to the bottom and gets hung up right away, you're using too much weight. If you don't see any of that bouncing along the bottom in the form of hesitation in the drift, then you're not getting deep enough."

Dave says that distinguishing between the nymph's bouncing on the bottom and a strike is difficult, which is why he likes to react to every change. "Experience, though,



Photos courtesy of Dave Rothrock

Nymph fishing expert Dave Rothrock: "You find out what's most prominent and then you start using nymphs that suggest what the trout are likely to see."

helps you develop a sense about what's a strike and what's not," he says.

"When fishing nymphs, the most important aspect is to observe so that can you plan your cast—I actually call it 'pre-cast strategy,'" Dave says. "You try to have the nymph and all of the leader up to where the line comes off the water and goes into the rod tip in the same current speed. If you are casting across currents, the fastest current is going to be the current that's going to determine what's going to happen to the fly. The faster current will cause drag, and then the fly will appear abnormal to the trout."

Dave says that how high you hold the rod and how far out from your body you hold it is important. Your position on the stream isn't the only factor that determines the water you can fish effectively—it's where the rod can be positioned in relation to the current.



For medium to smaller streams near Dave's home waters, he use a 9-foot, 4-weight outfit on streams that don't have a lot of brush. Later in the season with lower water, Dave uses a 2-weight line with a 9-foot rod. On bigger water, Dave uses heavier equipment but still with a 9-foot rod, all with floating line.

Dave uses floating line because it can help him determine how much depth of water to fish and how to adjust to different depths. He makes these adjustments by lengthening or shortening the leader. Dave's leaders average 11 or 12 feet.

"If you learn how to present nymphs, you can fish nymphs in almost any water type or conditions that you'll encounter on a stream," Dave says. "However, in very high water, it's important to entice the fish more, so I'd probably switch to streamers."

So how did someone who's self-taught acquire so much know-how? "Two factors contributed to my learning," Dave says. "First, I observed. As I fished, I'd ask myself questions about how something might be accomplished more effectively. Then I'd try to answer those questions through experimentation and observation."

The other factor was Dave's investing time to talk to anglers who knew more than he did and watch those anglers in action. "It's a matter of using your available resources efficiently," he says.

Furthermore, Dave fishes as often as he can. During the spring, summer and fall, he may fish as much as four to five days per week. During the off-season, he may get out on a stream only a few times a month. Still, he tries to fish all 12 months of the year.

Watch Dave work a nymph and you'll see the kind of fly-rod magic he's acquired.



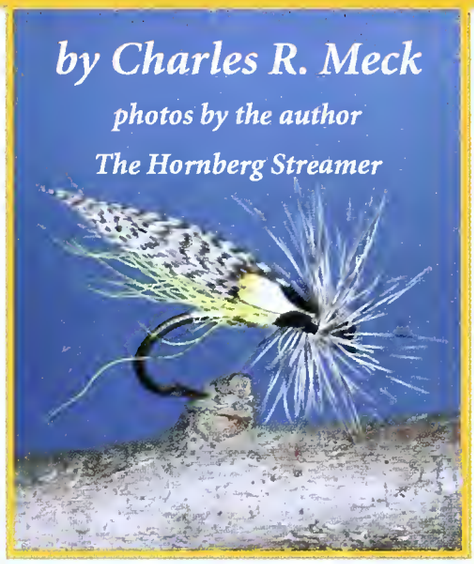
Streamers, Dry Flies and Terrestrials

Dave Rothrock's know-how includes a lot more skills than those required just for fishing nymphs. Here's what he says about fishing other offerings.

- **Streamers**. You can fish streamers in any water type. Fish streamers upstream to get the fly down to where the trout are. Most people have a tendency to cast streamers across and then strip them in as they are coming across-stream and arching downstream. Cast them more upstream so they'll sink faster. Try Woolly Buggers and marabou streamers—anything that imparts plenty of action. Movement in the fly is a key to fishing streamers.
- **Dry flies**. Fish dries when you see trout feeding on the surface. Fish them also when the fish aren't feeding well on the surface but you see an occasional rise. You know that the trout, as least some of them, are looking up. You can always match the hatch, but try attractor flies like a Royal Wulff or a Stimulator.
- **Terrestrials**. Look for no flies flying around that you can see in the air but you do see rise forms of surface-feeding trout, especially under tree branches or in an area where a breeze might be blowing flies into the water. I like ant and beetle patterns—anything that has a good shape of an ant or a good shape of a beetle, with good ant-like bulges and round or oblong beetle shapes.—*AM.*

The Hornberg Streamer

by Charles R. Meck
photos by the author

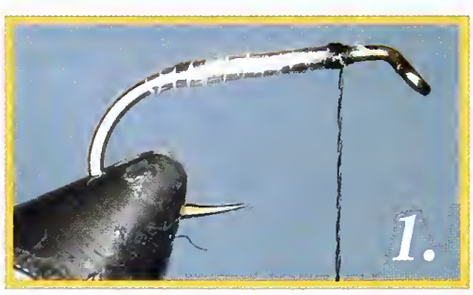


Angling friend Larry Wilson and I fished together on many opening days of the trout season in Pennsylvania. One thing that was as dependable and as certain as that opening day happening every year was the fly that Larry started the season with—one of his favorites, the Hornberg Streamer.

As with many patterns, many variations of the original Hornberg have appeared. The original Hornberg pattern called for jungle cock cheeks. Larry substituted imitation jungle cock. I often use the neck feathers from a ring neck pheasant. The original pattern also called for yellow hackle placed between the two mallard flank feathers—almost hidden. Larry added yellow calf tail fibers. Larry usually ties the fly on a size 8 regular wet-fly hook.

Hornberg Streamer

Hook: Size 6 or 8 wet-fly hook.
Thread: Black.
Body: Flat silver tinsel.
Wing: Two mallard flank feathers with a few hairs of yellow calf tail tied between.
Cheek: Imitation jungle cock or a pheasant neck feather.
Hackle: Grizzly.



1. Tie in silver tinsel at the bend and wind it forward up the shank two-thirds of the way to the eye. Make sure you cover the shank completely. Cut off the excess tinsel.



2. Cut and tie in a small bunch of yellow calf tail hairs just behind the eye. Let them extend about a quarter-inch past the bend.



3. Take two mallard flank feathers and place the dull sides (concave) facing each other to hide most of the yellow calf tail. Let the flank feathers extend past the bend a quarter-inch or more. Tie in and cut off the butts. Moisten the flank feather tips to form a point. Apply a bit of head cement to keep the feathers in that position.



4. Place a pheasant neck or jungle cock feather on both sides of the mallard as cheeks. Cut off the butts.



5. Tie in a grizzly hackle and wind about four or five times around the shank.



6. With the black thread form a fairly large head. Whip finish and apply head cement.

The Hornberg: Streamer with a Twist

by Carl Haensel

Originally a Wisconsin pattern, the Hornberg was created by Frank Hornberg, a game warden from Portage County, Wisconsin, and the pattern was popularized by the Weber Company of Steven's Point. The Hornberg was first tied as a dry fly to represent a large sedge caddis, and it has proven to be a versatile pattern. It has been adapted and tied in many variations, including its popular current variation as a streamer.



This nice brown trout fell for a Hornberg streamer that was cast near a logjam. Don't be afraid to put your flies right into thick cover. You'll certainly lose some flies, but the rewards can be great.

As a streamer, this fly has a most interesting and unusual property because of its thick hackle: It can be used as both a dry fly and a streamer. A true multi-purpose fly, it is a great searching pattern to use to explore new water. The most prominent and functional aspects of this fly are its mallard flank wings. When stripped underwater they pulsate and offer the angler a fly that provides movement. It doesn't just sit there. The barred appearance of the wings imitates small fish well, especially small trout and their parr markings. The smaller sizes of this fly can be some of the most effective small streamers available.

When fished as a dry fly, the Hornberg sits in the water's surface film. The mallard flank tented wing makes it resemble many of the large sedge caddis flies. Try treating it thoroughly with flotant to make it stay up a little bit longer. Versions that are tied on lighter and thinner hooks make this easier.

Cast it upstream and fish it on a dead drift as you would most dry flies. As opposed to most caddis flies, this one does not skitter across the surface well, so you will need to keep your rod tip high and your line tight if you use this technique.

To make this fly truly effective, a combination dry fly and streamer approach can be used. It can be cast upstream and drifted until the fly starts to swing below your position on the stream. Then the fly can be pulled under the surface with a rapid strip, and used as a streamer. As the fly continues to swing, strip it toward you in short, sharp pulses. The fly will ride just under the water's surface, as an escaping baitfish might behave. Fish from one position on the stream with this approach, and then shift a few feet upstream. That way, fish that have seen no fly will see the dry version first, a more delicate presentation. The fish in the middle will see the swing, and the fish that just saw the dry fly or swing will see a stripped streamer.

Even though this pattern allows you to show the fish a variety of presentations with one fly, some anglers choose to fish this pattern as a streamer all the time. If the fish are cold and down deep or if the water is off color, this tactic can be especially rewarding. If this strategy is your choice, you can fish this fly as you'd fish most other streamers. Since this fly is generally tied without any weight, you can include a splitshot or two in front of the fly to get it down in the current. Use a down-and-across cast to optimize the action of this fly, and an upstream cast if you've added weight and need to get the fly deep.

Another option is to swing your fly in front of a submerged stump or logjam. As your cast ends and your line stops swinging and straightens, hold the streamer in place near the obstruction that you've targeted. The mallard flank feathers will undulate in the current, which can provoke a hard strike. Twitch the fly a bit and wait. If you get no response, strip the fly back in, keep casting, and believe in your fly.

While there is no magic in a Hornberg that I know of, there's more than one angler who has made this pattern the "go-to" fly—for good reason.

NORTHERN SF

by Andrew L. Shiels

Pennsylvania's 16 frog and toad species range in size from the tiny spring peeper to the bullfrog. Spring peepers weigh less than a quarter-ounce, while adult bullfrogs can easily weigh over a pound.

Habits range from the totally aquatic bullfrog, which never strays more than a few feet from the water's edge, to the gray tree frog, which spends much of its time in trees hunting for insects and invertebrates. The moist skin of most frogs restricts them to the water or wet environments and microhabitats where humidity is high and water loss through the skin is low. Toads, on the other hand, have dry, warty skin, which minimizes water loss and allows them to occupy habitats far from water and high humidity. Still, even toads need some moisture.

Throughout each of their life stages, frogs and toads may be eaten by other animals. As eggs, they are prey for turtles. In the tadpole stage, fish and wading birds seek them out. After they metamorphose into juveniles (froglets or toadlets), they are prey for other frogs, fish, snakes, raccoons, mink, herons, egrets and many other organisms. The great numbers of eggs produced by frogs and toads are needed to ensure that at least a few will survive to reach adulthood and reproduce.

The wide diversity of frog and toad species leads to a long list of prey items that they consume. Insects, worms, slugs and spiders make up the diet of many species.

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission has regulations in place to limit the harvest of frogs and toads through the use of seasons and possession limits.

All of our frogs and toads use similar breeding strategies. Breeding takes place in water with males attracting females through the use of calling.

Several frog species native to Pennsylvania appear to have declined significantly in recent years. Pesticides, herbicides, and habitat loss and degradation singly and in combination threaten our populations of frogs and toads. It is essential that we find and address the causes of the decline to ensure their survival.

Pennsylvania's smallest frog, the spring peeper, *Pseudacris crucifer crucifer*, reaches lengths of between 3/4-inch and 1.25 inches. In addition to its minute size, an X-shaped dark mark on its back is the primary identifying characteristic. Peepers have dark bars on the legs, which when folded in the normal sitting position add to their camouflage. This frog's base color ranges from a light tan to reddish brown to chocolate brown, depending on the background or habitat in which it is found. Spring peepers are tree frogs, and they have suction discs on their toes to aid in climbing. Because of their under-chin vocal sacs, males have dark throats. Females have light-colored throats. Calling is a high-pitched sound described as a peep or chirp issued in about one-second segments.

Peepers prefer wetlands, wet meadows, bottomland timber, creek edges, swamps, areas around temporary ponds, lake edges, bogs and marshes. They are equally at home

State Wildlife Grants

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission administers the State Wildlife Grants Program funds from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for the protection of our trust species including fish, amphibians, reptiles and mussels. This program is designed for the protection of rare or declining animals and their habitats. Guided by the Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan, this program benefits all Pennsylvanians because these animals are frequently valuable indicators of environmental conditions and important components of our quality of life. Thus, this program is an investment for future generations and may save precious dollars by protecting current populations and habitats…today. For more information on this program, see **www.teaming.com**, and to view Pennsylvania's Wildlife Action Plan, see **http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/promo/grants/swg/00swg.htm**.

Pennsylvania currently lists 15 amphibians and 22 reptiles in the State Wildlife Action Plan as "species of greatest conservation need." Amphibian and reptile species of greatest conservation need include the green salamander, hellbender, mountain chorus frog, eastern spadefoot toad, Blanding's turtle, bog turtle, eastern massasauga rattlesnake, and timber rattlesnake.

See Section 10.6 of the Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan: **http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/promo/grants/swg/nongame_plan/pa_wap_sections/10priority_species.pdf**.

RING PEEPER

on the ground, in low bushes and on the lower portions of tree trunks.

This common species is found statewide.

Spring peepers are one of the first frogs to emerge in the spring and begin calling. Nighttime air temperatures of around 50 degrees and rain trigger emergence and calling. In southern Pennsylvania, these conditions can occur in early March if spring comes early. In northern Pennsylvania, peepers are almost always out at least once by April 1.

Although calling occurs reliably each night when the breeding season begins and temperatures stay warm, unseasonably warm temperatures exceeding 70 degrees will trigger day-long calling. Males travel to wetlands, temporary ponds, and roadside and drainage ditches and enter the chorus with other males. Females are attracted and mating occurs. Spring peepers deposit up to 1,000 eggs one at a time. The eggs are no larger than a pinhead.

The spring peeper is active through the warm months from March and April until October and November. Because of their small size and cryptic coloration, they aren't often seen outside of the breeding season when calling gives away their location. However, on warm fall evenings, particularly on rainy days, small numbers of individuals are often heard calling almost as if practicing for the following spring. Peepers eat small insects, mites, worms and other small invertebrates.



The spring peeper, Pennsylvania's smallest frog, reaches lengths of between 3/4-inch and 1.25 inches.

illustration-Tom Duran Jr.

Partnerships



by Spring Gearhart
photos by the author

Since 1932, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's Cooperative Nursery Unit has been partnering with clubs and organizations to raise and stock fish throughout the state. In 2006, Pennsylvania's 171 cooperative nurseries raised and stocked 970,577 trout, 140,520 steelhead, 800,000 walley fry, 1 million yellow perch fry, and 325 channel catfish. This effort would not be possible without the assistance of nurseries such as 3C's Trout Nursery in Carrolltown.

Six years as a nursery

In 2001, three clubs (the Bakerton Rod & Gun Club, the Rembrant Sportmen's Club, and the Carrolltown Rod & Gun Club) started the 3C's Trout Nursery (3 clubs). 3C's Trout Nursery is a cooperative nursery with a total membership of 1,650 (Bakerton Rod & Gun Club with 350 members, Rembrant Sportsmen's Club with 950 members, and Carrolltown Rod & Gun Club with 350 members).

The three clubs decided to consolidate efforts and start a cooperative nursery together to save money and to accomplish more in the community.

Working with the Cooperative Nursery Unit, it took one year to build the nursery. Members of the club completed much of the construction themselves including the raceway system, raceway gates, screens, and other metal work as well as the ground digging and cement work at cost to the club.

The club has a 50-year lease with the Carrolltown Fire Company for $1.00 per year. Himmels Farms gave the club permission to use its land for parking.

"We get a lot of good feedback and support from the community, local businesses, and anglers," says Dave Thomas, member.

The 3C's Trout Nursery meets the first Monday of every month at 8:00 p.m. Meetings are held at the nursery during summer months and at the Rembrant Sportsmen's Club, St. Benedict, the rest of the year. Membership dues are $3.00 per person. In addition, each club has its own membership dues. Membership age is 18 to 65.

Operation

Ten active members are involved in the daily operation of the nursery.

"One of our biggest goals is to get the younger generation involved in the operation of the nursery and fishing. They are our future," says Tim Gerlosky, member.

Currently, the club has four youth members: Kevin Bassett, John Abrams, Chris Gerlesky, and Darrell Lane.

Youth members mow the grass, clean up the building, and assist with

At a Glance

Nursery's Name:
3C's Trout Nursery

Operated by: Bakerton Rod & Gun Club, Rembrant Sportmen's Club, and Carrolltown Trout Nursery

Established: 2001

Years in Operation: 6

Chapter Membership: 1,650

Active Nursery Operation Membership: 10

Type of Fish Raised: Brook trout, rainbow trout, brown trout, and golden rainbow trout

Quantity Stocked: 6,937



Members of 3C's Trout Nursery include (back-left to right) Dave Contorchick, Kevin Bassett, and Norman Polites; (front-left to right) John Abrams, Tim Gerlesky, Tony Polisky, Dave Thomas, and Charles Spousky.

3C's Trout Nursery

feeding, and stock streams and fish derbies.

Dave Contorchick, ACE Contruction and member, designed the raceway to use the 150 feet of available space to its fullest potential. The raceway is completely enclosed in a building with garage doors to allow trucks access for unloading and loading fish. 3C's raceway system has three connected raceways side by side taking up less space length-wise and allowing water to come into the raceway in a zigzag fashion from a spring-fed pond.

"We have a consistent water temperature of 58 degrees, which is ideal for raising trout, and a regenerative air blower system with diffuser stones for aeration with a back-up generator. We also have excellent water flow, about 150 gallons per minute," says nursery manager Tony Polisky.



Youth members mow the grass, clean up the building, and assist with feeding, and stock streams and fish derbies. At 3C's Trout Nursery fish are hand-fed three times a day.

Each raceway is separated by trout species. Trout fingerlings arrive from the Commission the first or second week of June. Upon arrival, the club salts them for three days to relieve stress symptoms. After three days, the fingerlings are fed with a half-pound of food for each run. As fish eat well and grow, more food is given.



3C's raceway is completely enclosed in a building with garage doors to allow trucks access for unloading and loading fish. The raceway system has three connected raceways side by side.

At 3C's Trout Nursery fish are hand-fed three times a day. The raceway runs are cleaned after each feeding. The nursery is open to the public during feeding times at 6:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., and 6:00 p.m. Arrangements can be made to tour the nursery at other times by contacting Tony Polisky at 814-948-9284.

"Our fish grow about 1-inch per month. When we receive them, they are 2 to 4 inches long," says Polisky.

"I enjoy watching the fish grow," says Kevin Bassett, youth member.

One of the challenges of operating a cooperative nursery is keeping the fish healthy. "When symptoms of bacteria or disease show up, we work with the state (Cooperative Nursery Unit) for disease diagnosis and treatment. The Cooperative Nursery Unit inspects our nursery twice a year. They measure the fish, check the water flow, and inspect the feed," says Polisky.

Stocking

During the first year of operation, the club raised 2,600 trout. Last year, the club raised 3,000 brook trout, 3,000 rainbow trout, 1,500 brown trout, and 500 golden rainbow trout. Members stocked 6,937 trout in 2006.

3C's Trout Nursery donates 250 trout each to several derbies, including the Carrolltown Rod and Gun Club Derby, the Bakerton Rod & Gun Club Derby, the Rembrant Sportsmen Club Derby, the Carrolltown Rod and Gun Club Derby, the Chest Creek Watershed Alliance Kids Derby, the Emigh Sportsmen's Club Derby, and the Barr Township Rod and Gun Club Derby.

"The largest waterway we stock is Chest Creek where we stock 1,200 trout," says Polisky. In addition, the club stocks Laurel Lick Run, Bender's Run, Blacklick Creek, Clearfield Creek, Bakerton Dam, Emigh Sportsmen's Dam, Carrolltown Rod and Gun Dam, and Stolez's Dam. Some of these loca-

tions are also stocked by the Commission's regular stocking program.

"We coordinate our stockings with the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's stocking schedule," says Polisky.

Most of the waterways 3C's stocks are in Cambria County. However, they plan to expand stocking efforts this year to include several waterways in Clearfield County.

Members and community volunteers stock dams with 50 to 75 trout and streams with 250 to 1,200 trout during each trout stocking.

"Fish are 11 to 13 inches long at stocking time. Hold-over fish from the previous year are 18 to 21 inches long," says Dave Thomas.



The nursery's raceway system allows water to come into the raceway in a zigzag fashion from a spring-fed pond.

If weather is favorable, pre-season stocking is done in February. Regular stocking takes place the middle of March and the end of May.

"Watching the kids catch the fish we stock is one of the biggest rewards of being a cooperative nursery," says Tim Gerlesky.

Support and Funding

In 2005, the club received a $3,000 Cooperative Nursery Grant from the Commission for aerators, an aeration system, building insulation, and new aeratoars for their stocking truck.

3C's Trout Nursery also received a community development grant for the nursery building with support from State Representative Gary Haluska.

"The support we receive from all three communities (Bakerton, Carrolltown, and Rembrant) is excellent, and we greatly appreciate it," says Polisky.

Activities

The club sponsors monthly cash lottery tickets as well as an annual raffle drawing.

During the summer, members also organize an annual nursery clean-up day.

Recognition

Recently, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission presented 3C's Trout Nursery with a five-year cooperative nursery service award. The club also received a one-year cooperative nursery service award from the Commission.

In May 2004, 3C's Trout Nursery was awarded the Cambria County Conservation District Soisson Public Recreation Achievement Award.

For more information on 3C's Trout Nursery or to make a donation, contact Tony Polisky, P.O. Box 285, Elmara, PA 15737 or Dave Thomas, P.O. Box 101, Carrolltown, PA 15722.



With a consistent water temperature of 58 degrees, the nursery's water temperature is ideal for raising trout.

Rivers Conservation & Fly Fishing Youth Camp



The Rivers Conservation & Fly Fishing Youth Camp is a residential educational camp. It is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited and is hosted by the Cumberland Valley chapter at the Allenberry Resort Inn in Boiling Springs, PA. The camp began as a vision in 1995 with the discussions of the late Dr. Jack Beck and the late E.S. "Inky" Moore Jr. It has evolved into an intense multi-day program for youth between the ages of 14 and 17. Participants learn from experts and professionals in various conservation fields from across Pennsylvania and the nation.

Program goals

The purpose of the camp is to educate students in the importance of coldwater conservation and how it relates to everyday living. Through rigorous student selection, the camp attempts to select today's student leaders. It strives to prepare them to serve as tomorrow's leaders in their communities and in conservation.

Camp topics

The classes are based on college-level coursework that has been distilled to provide the students with a background in fundamental science. Classes include principles of ecology, hydrogeology, aquatic vertebrate and invertebrate sampling, hydrology, trout behavior, trout stream entomology, the biology of pollution, and the politics of conservation and the effects of humans on the Chesapeake Bay.

This camp is the learning experience of a lifetime, but it is not all work. There are hands-on classes in fly tying, fly casting, streamside ethics, wading safety, streamside botany, and habitat restoration. Students also experience fishing on the world-famous Yellow Breeches Creek. Fishing sessions are conducted both mornings and evenings. The students are advised and tutored by ghillies (guides) comprised of Trout Unlimited members. The angling is conducted in the Catch-and-Release section of the Yellow Breeches at Allenberry, made famous by the writing of Vince Marinaro, Charlie Fox, Ed Shenk, Ed Koch, and others.

Audience

The camp is geared toward youth who already possess some basic fishing experience but who want to develop those skills further and learn more about fly fishing for trout. Young people who are student leaders and who exhibit a strong interest in conservation and the natural world are encouraged to apply.

Admission

Each applicant must submit a written essay about why he or she would like to attend the camp, and the name of a student counselor or science teacher with





an address and a telephone number. Even though the school is subsidized by donors and sponsors, there is a fee. Current information on the fees are included in the application. Organizational sponsorship of students is strongly encouraged.

Camp date

The camp is held in the third full week in June. Specific dates are available on the application.

Learn more

Check the camp's web site, www.Riverscamp.com for photos, the student application, camp history, and more!

Instructors, contributors

The camp faculty is a list of leaders in their respective fields. They come from all walks of life and have an interest in conservation. State agencies such as the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, Department of Environmental Protection, and Department of Conservation and Natural Resources provide some of the faculty. The camp is honored to have Dr. Robert Behnke of Colorado State University, considered by many the foremost trout biologist in the world, among the faculty. Leading experts in the fly fishing community volunteer their time and talents to provide a faculty that is well-rounded.

In large part, the Rivers Conservation & Fly Fishing Youth Camp has been made possible through the efforts of many individual volunteers and sponsors. Additional Trout Unlimited chapters throughout the state contribute flies, tools, materials, and scholarships, and help to make the camp a success. Many instructors donate their time, equipment, and expertise to provide this experience.

In August 2001, the Rivers Conservation & Fly Fishing Youth Camp received the Volunteer Conservationist of the Year Award, sponsored by Trout Unlimited.





WCO Diary

by WCO Lewis Sweigart

Family Customs

This year's trout season is just around the corner, and are you ready? The season will open two weeks earlier in 18 southeastern counties. Make sure you plan with your family, friends and sportsmen's club this year for the opening day in your area. In Delaware County, we will have the new opening day of March 31. Since the Commission has been growing fish larger for this opening day, expect to see larger fish in your creel as well.



For those anglers who have caught many trout over the years, take this opening day to pass on the art of fishing to your family and friends.

I can remember the first fish I ever caught. I was so proud and my grandfather stood by with an approving smile. It is my greatest joy to recall the fond memories of my fishing experiences with my family. I can even remember the person who always caught the biggest fish on every family trip—to her chagrin, it was my mother.

What I am getting at is the fact that all members of my family enjoy fishing. This is because it was a tradition in my family starting with my grandparents who passed it on to their children, who in turn passed it on to me. Even today, when I visit with my family, we make it a point to get together to go fishing. Last summer we took a fishing trip. My grandfather, my father, my mother, my two aunts, my uncle, my two sisters, my three cousins and my two nephews all went fishing. Certainly some enjoyed themselves more than others (I caught the most fish), but we had a great time as a family. So the tradition of fishing continues in my family. So I ask, are you planning to go out on the opening day of trout season with your family?

Of course, not everyone has the opportunities to go with one's family as I have had growing up. Nevertheless, we all have opportunities to go fishing. The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission has set aside public lands for this very reason. Furthermore, there are many sportsmen's clubs across the Commonwealth that partner with the Fish & Boat Commission to provide opportunities for fishing for everyone. These clubs help new anglers not only learn how to fish, but they also help new anglers enjoy outdoor fishing opportunities and make new friends. If you have the desire to make fishing a new tradition for yourself and your family, seek the Fish & Boat Commission in your area by way of the regional aquatic resources program specialists (ARPS), or your local fishing and sportsmen's clubs to help you learn a new tradition. To contact your area's ARPS, visit the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**., or contact your Fish & Boat Commission regional office.

This is a great time of the year to prepare as trout season approaches. Take the time to learn which equipment you will need and which skills you will need to learn to catch your first fish.

For those anglers who have caught many trout over the years, take this opening day to pass on the art of fishing to your family and friends. Get involved with your local sportsmen's clubs and pitch in to help preserve the tradition of trout fishing. This opportunity can be for the most advanced angler who has mastered the art of fishing or for those who can just barely bait a hook.

All of us, whichever fishing method we use, can help pass on the tradition of trout fishing to future generations. As new anglers become more interested in the outdoors, they can become conservationists who will care about the environment and help protect our common natural resources for generations to come.

Finally, as you take the picture of a young person's first trout this year, you will share in the pride they feel as you pass on the tradition to them, and they will remember your smile and help for the rest of their lives.



French Creek, Chester County

photos-Art Michaels

REFLECTING ON THE WATER
Opening Day Traditions

by Ron Kuhn

illustrations by the author

Several people stood on the bridge and peered over the sides into the water. Some were casting pea-sized pieces of bread into the flowing water below to locate trout, while others gazed downstream to deep pools and riffles. Jack motored slowly across the bridge on his way to the local tackle shop. Trout season seemed to come fast this year. Many bait shops were fully stocked several weeks before, but Stevens, near Ephrata, Lancaster County, was Jack's final stop before the big day. He had planned to meet Beth and the kids at his in-laws' camper, which they kept year-round at the local campground.

The first day of trout season was a tradition in Beth's family. They would head to camp a night or so before opening day to enjoy the breaking winter weather. Campfires and great food were highlights, and several other folks in the campground took part in the festivities—it was a great excuse to get together.

As Jack walked up and down the isles, he made notes about what people were buying this year to trick the trout that lurked in the nearby streams. After looking around he made his way toward the counter to wait for the last customer to check out.

"How are you doing, Jack?" The older gentleman asked as he peered across the counter. Jack looked at the poster displaying the year's creel limits. "I'm doing great; how have you been, Ike?" Ike rested his arms on the counter, "Getting older, seems like yesterday your grandfather was bringing you in here to buy hooks. Now you're selling hooks!"

Jack smiled as he thought of himself as a kid walking up and down the isles, wishing he could try every kind of lure on his favorite stretch of water.

"Do you remember that time your grandfather and I took you down on the Bermudian for carp?" Jack smiled. "Do you mean the time I accidentally rolled the dough ball Pap made into the creek?" Ike said, "I don't think there was much of the dough left—you used to eat more of it than the carp!"

Jack's grandfather used to make his doughballs on an old cook stove using milk, corn meal and a little sugar, too tasty for a little fisherman to let it all go to the carp.



Jack talked to Ike for quite a while until he realized he should be on his way to the campground. Ike handed Jack a bottle of home-made birch soda for the kids and wished him luck for tomorrow's fishing. Jack drove on the light-gray back roads surrounded on both sides by newly tilled dark-red clay soil native to Adams County. Cedar trees interwoven with honeysuckle vines created the illusion that Jack was in a maze on his way to the campground.

When Jack entered the campground, children were riding their bicycles up and down the rows of campers as some familiar faces stood around campfires waving to the newcomer. As he pulled into a parking spot, Beth and the kids came out to greet him.

"Dad!" Ethan yelled. "There's a huge brook trout down at our favorite spot where the big tree uprooted a long time ago!" Jack looked at Beth with a smirk. As he unloaded the van, Ethan and Ellie told their dad about the giant brook trout that their grandfather had told them about. Jack wasn't used to all the conveniences of the camper, but he didn't complain—he was used to old cabins and tents.

When Jack was younger, his grandfather used to bring him to this area when the campground was a meadow. The tree the kids mentioned was an old sycamore that used to be the biggest tree along the creek until it blew over when Hurricane Agnes came through. Over the years the stream routed itself under the tree, creating great habitat for fish and the neighboring muskrats. During trout season, anglers work the stream hard for trout. When he was a kid, Jack used to catch everything there from rock bass to small bullheads.

Beth set the table as Jack rode bicycles with the kids around camp. The temperature was beginning to drop as Beth's dad lit the newspaper crumpled beneath the firewood in their fire ring. As the family sat at the picnic table for dinner, the kids bet who would catch the brook trout while Jack savored the elk steak from the 6x6 Beth's dad, Don, had taken in Colorado the previous fal

Don likes to get the kids excited about fishing, especially Pennsylvania trout fishing. Don has fished pretty much all over the U.S. and parts of Canada, more so since he retired, but he says he wouldn't ever give up fishing in the Keystone State. Over the years he has been a member of several mid-state sportsmen and conservation clubs, dedicating weekends to cleaning up streams, creating habitat, and his favorite activity, teaching kids all about fishing.



Every year Don and his wife Mary get up at 5 to start breakfast for the family. Cooking is Don's other passion. This year he bought a large propane griddle to cook everything—eggs, bacon, home fries and pancakes.

As soon as their mother mentioned that it was almost time to go fishing, the kids were up and wide awake. Jack drank his coffee as the sun began to rise over the ridge. He noticed how everything was beginning to turn green. Skunk cabbage had begun pushing up through the brown carpet of leaves left from last autumn.

Jack and Beth stayed at the camper to clean up from breakfast and relax while Beth's parents took Ethan and Ellie fishing. As lunchtime approached, the kids came back to the camper with their grandparents.

"How did you kids do?" Asked Beth. "Ethan caught four nice rainbows and Ellie caught a small brown that we let go and a nice brook that she also wanted to release." Don decided to take a nap after lunch, so Jack took the kids far downstream to several spots that are hard to find.

"How much farther is it?" Ellie questioned. "Just around the bend," Jack replied. It didn't appear that anyone had fished that creek stretch. Jack showed the kids where to cast their lines as he placed them at two different pools. He sat beneath a huge white oak and soaked up some sun. He thought about the great battle that raged in Gettysburg in the last century, and he wondered if the battle could be heard from where he sat.

He watched Ethan fish and thought about the many dads who had never fished with their sons again because they were killed in that battle. At times like these, he realized how good life can be as his good thoughts overshadowed his lack of memories fishing with his own dad.

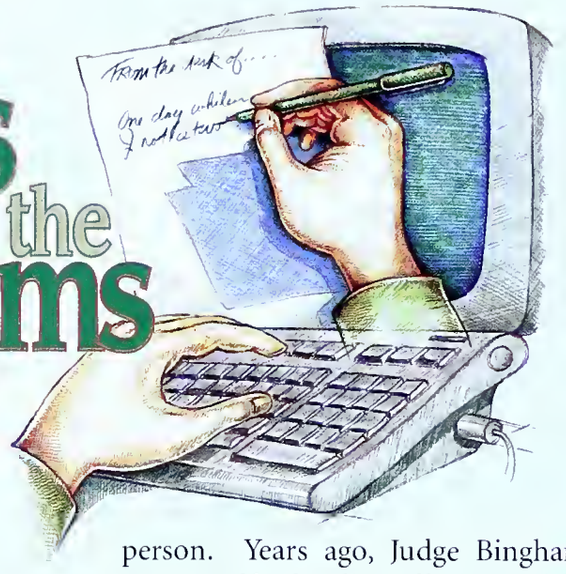
In a distant field, a gobbler made himself known by his deep bellowing gobble. "Turkeys and trout," Jack thought to himself. In May, many of Jack's friends like to go gobbler hunting in the morning and fish for trout in the afternoon. When Ethan is old enough for hunting, they will probably start that tradition.

The kids kept enough trout to feed everyone at dinnertime. On the way back to camp, they came across a very happy young boy who caught the "giant" brook trout. Ethan and Ellie admired the 22-inch brookie as the boy posed for pictures with his dad and mom. Jack handed the camera back to the father and congratulated the young fisherman. Following their father's sportsmanship, Ethan and Ellie congratulated the boy but hoped that they would catch a big one sometime.

That evening everyone sat at the table telling tales of trout season openers from days gone by and feasted on the trout the kids caught. Jack thought about how nice it was to have in-laws who share his interests.

The next evening, Jack sat at his computer, sending digital pictures of the weekend to family and friends. With warmer weather coming, Jack's thoughts turned to getting everyone out in canoes and kayaks for some overnight camping.

Notes from the Streams



Bedford County judicial system

An employee of the Bedford County Conservation District informed me that he had discovered some trash that had been dumped along Shobers Run, an approved trout water. I informed him that unless there was something with a name on it or other traceable evidence, I wouldn't be able to prosecute.

I arrived at the site and it did not take me long to locate two large, gray plastic trash bags along the stream. I put on a pair of rubber gloves and pulled one of the bags up over the bank to the parking area. I opened the bag and found that it contained mostly household trash. Sifting through the mess, I was surprised to find an envelope addressed to a man in Bedford. I was more surprised to see that the return address on the envelope was District Justice H. Cyril Bingham's office in Bedford. I found out later that this envelope contained a hearing notice to inform the litterbug of a recent harassment charge.

I continued sifting and found several more items with the same person's name on it. I pulled the other bag of trash from the stream bank. This bag of trash was very heavy. It contained broken pieces of plate glass placed in a carton. Eventually this glass would've become scattered on the stream bank and possibly injure an angler or kids playing along the stream bank. I gathered the evidence and went to District Justice Bingham's office.

I showed Judge Bingham the envelope and he told me a story about this person. Years ago, Judge Bingham was a Bedford police officer. He had performed a vehicle stop one evening in front of the litterbug's residence. While trying to subdue and handcuff the driver, the litterbug came out of his house and struck Judge Bingham in the back for no apparent reason. The litterbug was cited for assault along with other charges. Judge Bingham told me that this person has been a regular visitor to his office.

I filed charges on the litterbug, who paid in full. Apparently, this individual can't get enough of the Bedford County judicial system.—*WCO Terrance L. Kaue, Bedford/Western Fultou Counties.*

Unusual opener

Opening day of trout season was somewhat different recently at Upper Woods Pond. Usually hundreds of anglers take to the lake to pursue the coldwater fish in early April. That year, however, a thin, sloppy coating of ice allowed for a minimal area for shore fishing and made it nearly impossible to launch a boat. Ice fishing was out of the question. I was able to count 13 determined and dedicated anglers trying their luck in the only open water.—*WCO Dave Kaueski, Northeru Wayne County.*

Fish and/or Boat Commission?

While patrolling stocked trout water before opening day, Game Commission DWCO Kabler and I spotted an individual fishing. After a few minutes of observation, we approached the individual to terminate the illegal activity. Upon approach, I identified myself as a state officer with the PA Fish & Boat Commission, and the individual responded, "Well, I don't own a boat."

It took every bit of professionalism on both our parts to continue the encounter with straight faces. Needless to say, the appropriate paperwork was issued relating to the fish law violation.

In light of our arm patches, DWCO Kabler suggested that we re-do them again to read, "PA Fish and/or Boat Commission."—*DWCO Jasou Farabaugh, Southwest Regioual Office.*

They're everywhere

After an in-season stocking in Juniata County, Officer Britcher and I decided to patrol a secluded stream section that had just been stocked with nice brook trout. We decided to hide in some laurel about 20 yards from the stream.

About an hour passed before three anglers arrived. These anglers immediately started catching fish. We noticed that they were releasing all the fish that they were catching. Officer Britcher had other obligations before his shift ended, so he decided that he would speak with these anglers before he left. I decided to stay hidden for other potential violators.

After Officer Britcher's brief encounter with the anglers, they continued to catch fish at a phenomenal pace. I could hear each of the anglers bragging to the others about how many they had caught. I heard one say "35," another said "39," and then the other, "45." The competition between the anglers went on for about an hour.

The evening was finally winding down and the three anglers collected their gear—well almost all of it. One of the anglers had finished up a bait container, gripped it like a baseball, and threw it deep into the woods. I stood up, and one of the anglers said, "Fish wardens are everywhere." I issued a citation for littering.—*WCO Richard Morder, Juniata County.*

Sinnemahoning State Park

by Laurel Anders



photo: Laurel Anders

Steep, rugged mountainous terrain and cold valley streams come to mind at the mention of the Pennsylvania Wilds. Located deep in the heart of the Wilds is Sinnemahoning State Park, a 1,910-acre snapshot of Pennsylvania's backcountry in western Cameron County. On any summer weekend, the park bustles with activity. But this area once stirred with a different kind of activity.

From the mid-1800s through 1910, the town of Sinnemahoning (nine miles south of the park) was a focal point of the logging industry. Sinnemahoning Creek was a route on which loggers moved their timber to the lumber super highway of the time—the West Branch Susquehanna River.

In the mid-1900s, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania commissioned the construction of a flood control dam on one of the Sinnemahoning's tributaries, the First Fork Sinnemahoning Creek. Originally known as the First Fork Dam, it was later renamed in honor of Clinton County Senator and former mayor of Lock Haven George B. Stevenson, who pushed for legislation authorizing flood control projects. Completed and dedicated in 1956, the George B. Stevenson Dam drains 243 square miles and is one of five flood control dams in the Susquehanna River Watershed. The state park opened in 1958 for recreational use of the impoundment and the surrounding area.

The reservoir

George B. Stevenson Reservoir is a long, narrow 142-acre impoundment (normal pool) with nearly three miles of shoreline. With a maximum depth of 30 feet, an average depth of 14 feet, and a shallow transitional area where the First Fork enters the reservoir, the

(article continued on page 34)



ELK STATE FOREST

Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER

www.fish.state.pa.us

Brooks Run Cabin

One Way

Low Lands Trail

To PA 120 & Sinnemahoning, 8 Mi.

Smith Cemetery

Roaring Run

Brooks Run

Muley Run

Lushbaugh Run

Little Bailey Run

Short Bend Run

Woodrock Run

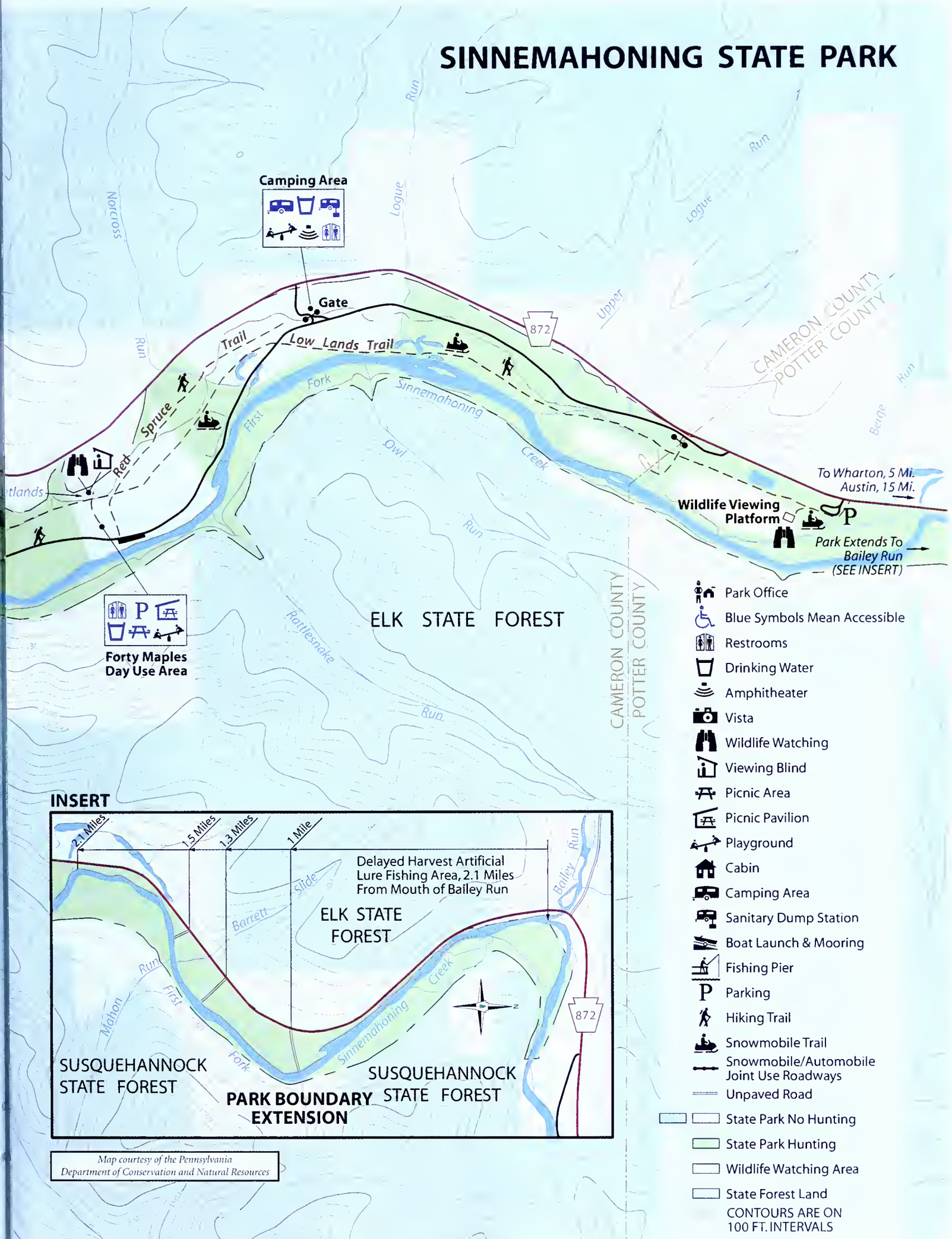
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SINNEMAHONING STATE PARK



INSERT

Map courtesy of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

impoundment offers a wide variety of fishing opportunities for all types of anglers. Coldwater species include brook, brown and rainbow trout. There are also smallmouth and largemouth bass, bluegills, pickerel, perch, crappies, catfish and tiger muskellunge.

The medium-sized reservoir has been drawing anglers' attention with an increased abundance of warmwater sportfish over the last several years. Lake aging and the resulting increased shallow water habitat have been a benefit to largemouth bass, bluegill and brown bullhead populations. The impoundment has been stocked with trout since the late 1950s and remains a catchable trout fishery with adult trout stocked pre-season, in-season and during the extended (fall/winter) season. The reservoir is also noted as a fishing hotspot for smallmouth bass and winter/ice fishing.

Since 2000, Stevenson Reservoir has been part of the Fish & Boat Commission's Adopt-a-Lake program with many porcupine crib fish habitat structures installed near the shoreline. About 10 bass nesting devices were installed along with turtle basking platforms during the last few years. Turtle basking platforms provide a rare chance to view a resident spiny softshell turtle basking during the summer just off the mooring area.

The reservoir is managed under the Early Season Trout-Stocked Waters regulations. During March, when most trout-stocked waters are closed to fishing, anglers may fish Stevenson Reservoir, which has been stocked early with a portion of the spring's trout allotment. From March 1 to March 31, the minimum size limit for trout is 7 inches with a creel limit of 3 trout per day (combined species). Inland regulations apply to all other species. Extended-season anglers (late winter/early spring) typically choose shore angling or ice fishing (weather permitting) as the preferred method of targeting stocked trout using both lures and bait.

During the traditional spring season, anglers take to boats and the shore to target trout with live bait. Anglers will probably catch other fish during this period, so be prepared with knowledge of seasons, sizes and creel limits that apply to other fish species. Panfish come on strong during the summer, and they are easy to catch along the shorelines with live bait.

Anglers who take advantage of the reservoir's fall and winter fishing often stay on shore for stocked trout. Anglers targeting warmwater species fish from shore or from boats. Regardless of the target, anglers report live bait is the name of the game.

A variety of boats can be found on the reservoir, but all must be unpowered or powered only with electric motors. Shallow- to moderate-draft fishing boats, small sailboats, canoes and kayaks are best suited for Stevenson Reservoir. One surfaced boat launch is available in the park just below the park office, where restrooms and vending machines can also be found. Parking is available at the boat launch, which sometimes gets crowded with visitors and spotting scopes focused on the resident bald eagles. Another larger parking area is within a short walk of the launch ramp. Mooring space for 45 boats is available, providing convenience for day-use visitors as well as campers. A permit is required for overnight mooring. Motorboats and non-powered boats must follow current registration/permit requirements detailed on the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**, and in the *PA Boating Handbook*.

Sightings of bald eagles are common and close encounters are something to be photographed. Boaters should take note to observe restricted areas carefully during the bald eagle nesting season. There are several wildlife viewing areas in the park, and they may be reached by park roads or hiking trails.

The creek

The First Fork Sinnemahoning Creek upstream of the reservoir (extending into Potter County) is a popular stocked trout fishery where anglers prefer live bait and artificial lures. You'll find a 2.1-mile Delayed-Harvest, Artificial-Lures-Only section on the First Fork Sinnemahoning Creek from the confluence with Bailey Run downstream to near the SR 0872 bridge upstream of Berge Run.

Seasonal northcentral Pennsylvania fly hatches occur on the stream. Many small, cold tributary streams entering the First Fork and Stevenson Reservoir provide good angling.

Sinnemahoning State Park provides an excellent canoe/kayak camping opportunity. Boaters may start near Wharton and float a total of 20 miles to where the First Fork enters Sinnemahoning Creek at Jericho. There is informal hand-launching, but pay close attention to private land postings and be respectful of landowners. Plan for overnight camping in the park's campground because camping is not permitted on the remainder of the float. Boaters must also be prepared to portage around the nearly 170-foot-high dam. This easy and scenic float parallels PA Route 872, and boaters may see or hear occasional road traffic and a wide diversity of wildlife.

Laurel Anders is the Fish & Boat Commission's Northcentral Region aquatic resources program specialist.

More Information

For additional information on current fishing and boating regulations, visit the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**.

For more park information, rules and regulations, visit **www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/sinnemahoning.aspx**. Campground sites may be reserved at 1-888-PA-PARKS.

To make a weekend of it, visit **www.visitPA.com**.

To discover more about the Pennsylvania Wilds, visit **www.dcnr.state.pa.us/info/pawilds/index.aspx**.—LA.

Dedicated to the Memory of Commissioner Enoch S. "Inky" Moore Jr.

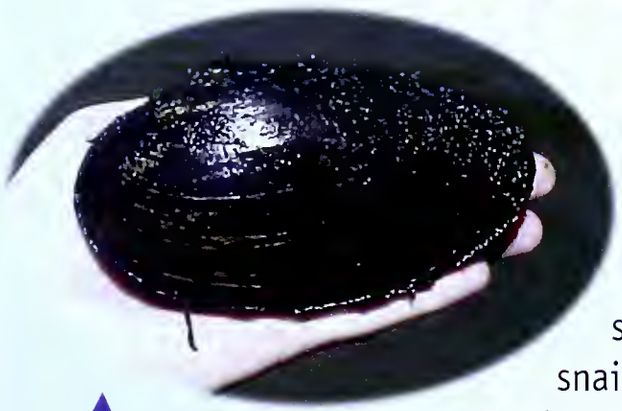
PLAY

Spring 2007

Pennsylvania • League • of • Angling • Youth

Flex Your Mussel Knowledge

by Keith Edwards



▲ Creeper mussel

Mussels are becoming harder to find. Mussels, along with snails and clams, are members of the mollusk family. This family is the world's second largest group of animals. There are about 100,000 mollusk species worldwide. A mollusk can be as small as a snail or as large as a 20-foot-long giant squid.

Freshwater mussels in Pennsylvania are called ***bivalves***. Bivalves have two shells, or valves. They are filter-feeders. Water is pulled in through a ***siphon***. Their gills filter the water for oxygen and ***plankton*** needed for food.

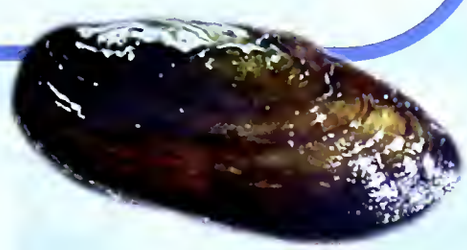
In the United States, there were once nearly 300 different freshwater mussel species. There are 50 mussel species remaining in Pennsylvania. It is estimated that 15 other species are **extirpated**, which means that they are no longer found in Pennsylvania.

This issue of PLAY focuses on the life history of mussels found in Pennsylvania, and some of the reasons why mussel populations are declining.

White heel splitter mussel ▼



◀ Fatmucket mussel



Spike mussel ▲

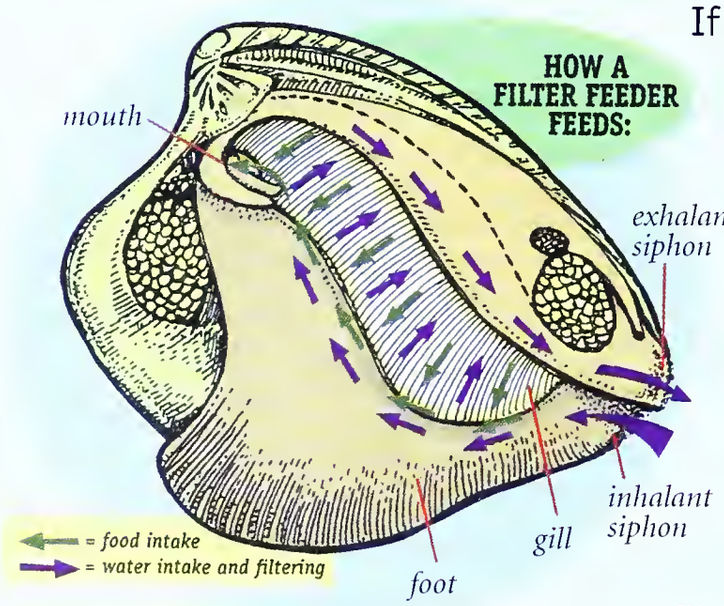
Healthy Mussels = Healthy Water

Pocketbook mussel



Mussels can make water cleaner. Mussels pull, or inhale, water into their soft body through a siphon. The gills filter oxygen and suspended food particles. During this process, the mussel also filters particles of bacteria, silt, ***detritus*** and chemicals. Detritus is small bits of decaying plant and animal material. The mussel then expels, or exhales, all water and any wastes through another siphon. This process makes the water cleaner than it was before the mussel filtered it. One of the chemicals that a mussel filters from the water is calcium carbonate. This chemical is used to form the mussel's shell.

Mussels may absorb some chemical pollutants in their bodies and shells. These chemicals can build up over time. This process is called ***bioaccumulation***. If these mussels are collected and then studied in a laboratory, scientists can identify the contaminants to determine the water quality conditions that have existed in the mussel's aquatic ***habitat***. Pollutants in the soft, fleshy interior parts of the mussel can indicate recent or current exposure. Pollutants in the shell can indicate past chemical exposure.



Mussels are filter-feeders. They absorb filtered food through their mouths for nutrients. Gills absorb oxygen for the mussels to breathe. The foot of the mussel is a muscle used to move across the bottom of rivers and streams. Mussels have an inhalant siphon and an exhalant siphon. The inhalant siphon is used to draw water into the mussel's body and the exhalant siphon is used to expel water and wastes.

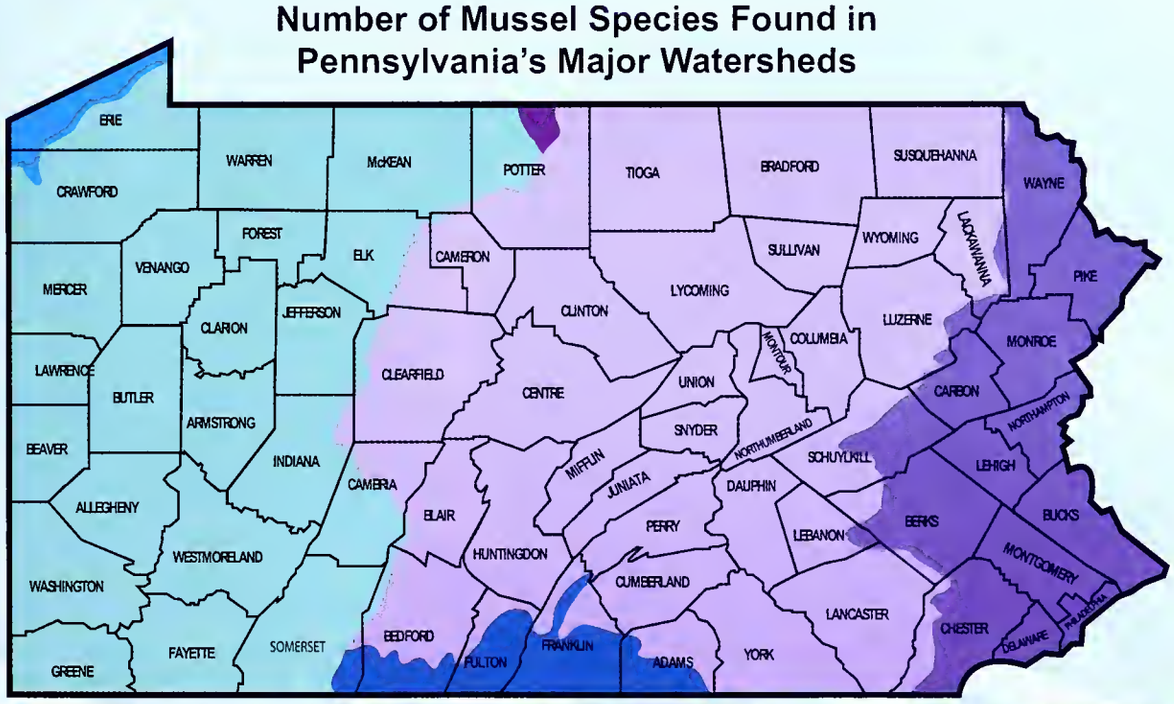
Where do Mussels Live?

Mussels live on the bottom of rivers, streams and lakes. They like the shallow, sandy and gravelly parts, but some mussels can live in mud. Some mussel species prefer deeper and colder water than others. Some mussel species like faster-flowing water, while others choose habitats that have slower-moving current. Large mussel populations live in French Creek, a ***tributary*** of the Allegheny River, which is in the Ohio River Watershed. Some 26 different mussel species can be found there. The map on this page shows the number of species in each of the major river watersheds.

How do biologists identify different mussel species?

A ***malacologist*** studies mollusks. These biologists examine different characteristics to identify mussels: Shell size, thickness, shape, texture, color (inside and out) and patterns of lines, waves and bumps; color of the fleshy body; and the location where the mussel was found. Male and female mussels of the same species may have somewhat different sizes and shapes.

Number of Mussel Species Found in Pennsylvania's Major Watersheds

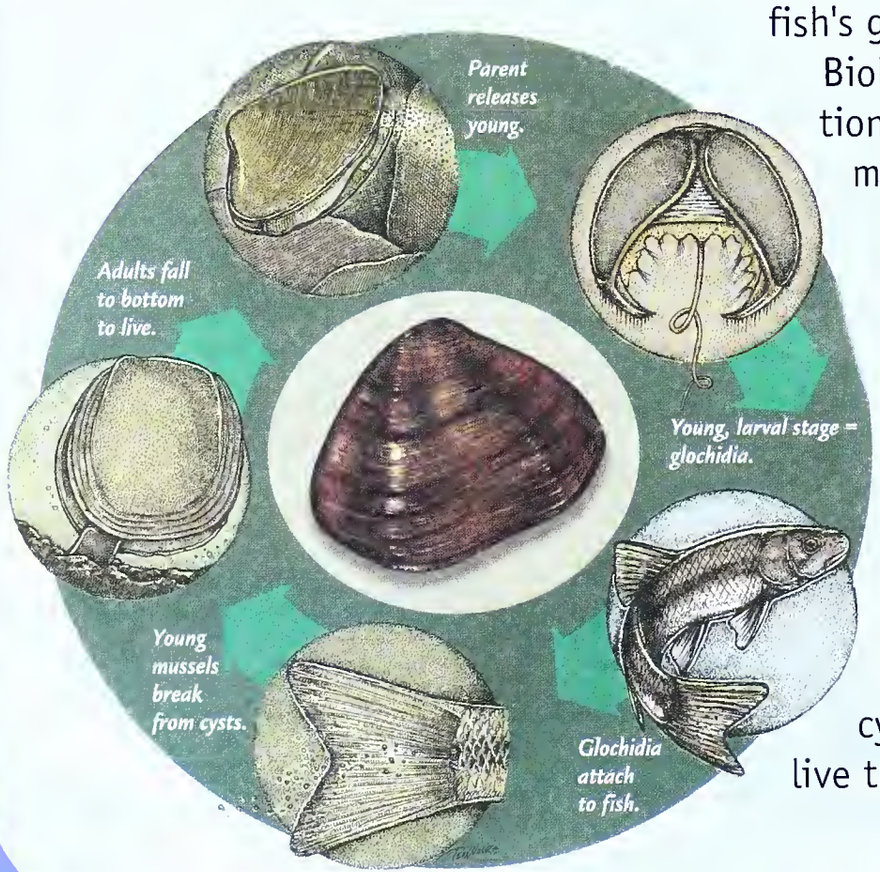


Birth of new Mussels

Fertilized eggs develop inside the female parent's shell. The parent releases the young (called glochidia), through the exhalant siphon. They are the size of a period on this page. Some mussel species put their fertilized eggs in tiny packages called conglutinates, while other species release individual ***larvae***. Some fish think the packages are food and swallow them.

The individual or packaged larvae may sink to the bottom and wait until a "host" fish brushes against the bottom. The larvae may also float in the water column until they are eaten or touched by a fish. Each larva then attaches to a fish.

Some mussel species attach only to certain fish species. For example, the salamander mussel is a rare Pennsylvania species that attaches to a specific amphibian host species—the large salamander known as the mudpuppy. To increase the chances of their young making contact with a fish host, some females "go fishing." By displaying specially adapted tissues that look like a tiny minnow, they lure fish to swim near them. Sensing a fish nearby, the female releases her young toward the fish. The young then attach to the fish's gills or fins.



Biologists believe that the selection of specific fish hosts helps the mussel species spread its young to areas most likely to have the type of habitat they need to survive. If the glochidia attach to the wrong fish host, they typically die. After they attach to the host fish, the tissues of the fish grow over the tiny larvae and create a cyst. When ready, the young mussel breaks out of the cyst and falls to the bottom to live the rest of its adult life.

Why are Mussels in danger?

Mussels are one of the most endangered groups of animals. Protecting mussel habitat protects mussel populations. Populations can decline from changes in water conditions and water quality. These changes are brought about by dredging, which uproots mussels and destroys their habitat. Dams reduce water flow, which reduces available food nutrients. In addition, siltation changes water quality. Soil eroded off the land settles out of the water and smothers the mussels. Pollution from industrial, agricultural, mining, oil and gas well-drilling, chemicals, and other sources enter the water and poison mussels.

Changes in water quantity also cause mussel populations to decline. Droughts make shallow water more reachable by predators. Droughts can also raise water temperature. Flooding can also damage or destroy mussel habitat.

Removing water from rivers can destroy or damage mussel habitat. Water relocation, building bridges for roads, and ***poaching*** can also disturb mussel populations.

Mussel populations are affected by the loss of certain "host" fish, to which newborn mussels attach for growth.

Competition for food and space from ***invasive species*** like zebra mussels also affects native mussel populations.

Zebra Mussel Invasion

Zebra mussels have nearly eliminated native mussels in some locations. In 1988, the first zebra mussels were spotted in Lake St. Claire near Lake Erie. These invaders arrived as stowaways in the ballast water of a ship from Europe. They are now found in many waterways in the eastern half of the United States. They are much smaller (less than 2 inches) than native mussels, and they reproduce rapidly. They attach themselves to hard surfaces. In zebra mussel-infested waters, it is not unusual for native mussels to be completely covered by zebra mussels. Competition for food and oxygen weakens and eventually starves native mussels.



Zebra Mussels

Which Mussels are in danger?



Northern riffleshell mussel

In Pennsylvania, the northern riffleshell, the dwarf wedgemussel and the clubshell are currently on the federal endangered species list.

Currently, three mussel species in Pennsylvania are on the federal ***endangered species*** list. They are the northern riffleshell, the dwarf wedgemussel and the clubshell. The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission has also listed these three species, as well as the eastern pearlshell, as state endangered so that they receive special protection. Scientists are studying these four species and many others in Pennsylvania and around the world because of the severe decline in their numbers.

About 25 additional mussel species (or half of the species remaining) in Pennsylvania are rare and declining in abundance. Globally, mussels are the most imperiled taxa—group of similarly classified organisms in the animal kingdom. This decline in mussel abundance and continuing threat to their survival also appear to be true in Pennsylvania.

The Future of Mussels

Many different agencies are working together to find solutions to problems facing our mussels. They are surveying, monitoring and restoring habitats. Some mussels facing extinction have been taken to fish hatcheries for safekeeping. Hatcheries are developing ways to raise rare mussels for release. They are then put back into restored streams and rivers. Aquariums and zoos also help by conducting research and education programs.

Clubshell mussel ▶



Keith Edwards is the Commission's Northwest Region aquatic resources program specialist.

Can Mussels move?

Mussels have a muscular "foot" that helps them burrow and move small distances. During early fall, mussels tend to move deeper into suitable riverbed material. They may burrow downward several feet from the riverbed's surface. This movement is believed to be triggered by dropping water temperature and shorter daily hours of sunlight. The foot also helps anchor them against strong currents and may prevent a hungry muskrat from tugging them out for its dinner!

A mussel's shell, however, provides its main protection from predators. Their hard, calcium-based shells consist of two halves joined by a hinge.

Match the Word to the Definition (Words can be found in this newsletter).

A. Bivalves
B. Siphon
C. Plankton
D. Malacologist
E. Tributary
F. Larvae
G. Habitat
H. Invasive species
I. Endangered species
J. Extirpated
K. Bioaccumulation
L. Detritus
M. Poaching

_____ 1. Organisms at risk of becoming extinct because they are so few in number or threatened by changing environmental conditions.

_____ 2. The early, immature forms of an animal at birth before they change into adults.

_____ 3. Small bits of decaying plant and animal material.

_____ 4. Plant or animal that threatens environmental or agricultural resources by the damage it causes.

_____ 5. The place or environment where a plant or animal naturally or normally lives and grows.

_____ 6. Having a pair of shells, or valves.

_____ 7. No longer found.

_____ 8. Taking game or fish by illegal methods.

_____ 9. A person who studies mollusks.

_____ 10. A smaller stream or river that flows into another larger stream, river or lake.

_____ 11. Microscopic plants and animals suspended in the water.

_____ 12. A tubular organ used to draw in or eject fluids.

_____ 13. The process of an organism or part of an organism's absorbing chemical pollutants.

PLAY
Edited by: Art Michaels
Illustrations: Ted Walke
Photos: George Gress, Ohio Sea Grant, and Andy Shiels
Layout and design: Spring Gearhart
PLAY Subscriptions: Jean Davis and Marty Miller
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1. I; 2. F; 3. L; 4. H; 5. G; 6. A; 7. J; 8. M; 9. D; 10. E; 11. C; 12. B; 13. K

2006 PFBC Photography Contest

From a total of 208 entries, judges selected first-, second- and third-place winners and one honorable-mention winner in the six categories of the 2006 PA Fish & Boat Commission Photography Contest.

First-, second- and third-place winners received a certificate, the limited-edition 2006 trout stamp patch, and the limited-edition 2006 non-game species patches (northern red salamander and green salamander). Honorable-mention winners received a certificate and the limited-edition 2006 non-game species patches.

For the second year, judges also chose a "best in show" winner. That winner (see below), chosen from all the first-place category winners, received a framed 1991 trout/salmon stamp poster. The Commission began issuing trout stamps in 1991.

Special thanks go to the judges: Commission editor Spring Gearhart, Commission Southcentral Region aquatic resources program specialist Alice Stitt, and *PA Angler & Boater* editor Art Michaels. Special thanks also go to Bureau of Boating & Education employees Marty Miller and Jean Davis for tracking the submissions as they arrived and for organizing the entries for judging.

Winning photographs may appear in future issues of *PA&B* and in other Commission publications, exhibits, projects and media. Winning entries also appear on the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**.

Turn to page 48 to view the 2007 PA Fish & Boat Commission Photography Contest rules and entry form. The entry deadline is December 31, 2007. Don't wait! Search your photographs, plan a photography trip now, fill out an entry form (required), and enter the 2007 contest!

Young Anglers and/or Boaters

First Place/Best in Show
Scott R. Walck
Throop, PA
8-year-old Lauren Walck at Lackawanna Lake, Lackawanna State Park, Lackawanna County





Second Place
Timothy Miller
Harleysville, PA
11-year-old Evan Miller with a nice smallmouth bass



Third Place
Heidi Pletcher
Mechanicsburg, PA
Kaylie and Natalie at Laurel Hill Creek, Somerset County



Honorable Mention
Louis N. Ammon
Verona, PA
Nicholas Ammon with a sunfish caught at Lake Arthur, Moraine State Park, Butler County

Reptiles, Amphibians, Invertebrates



First Place
Lou Izzo
Jeannette, PA
Green Drake mayfly at Yellow Creek, Bedford County

Second Place
Daniel E. Weeks
Pittsburgh, PA
Northern green frog,
Conneaut Marsh,
Crawford County





Third Place
Jacob W. Dingel
Butler, PA
Bullfrog,
State Game Lands 95,
Butler County

Honorable Mention
Jacob W. Dingel
Butler, PA
Eastern garter snake,
State Game Lands 95,
Butler County





First Place
Louis N. Ammon
Verona, PA
Cucumber Falls, Ohiopyle State Park, Fayette County

Waterway Scenics (Flowing Water)



Second Place
Dennis Raphael
Clifton, PA
Darby Creek, Delaware County



Third Place
Jacob W. Dingel
Butler, PA
Slippery Rock Creek, McConnells Mill State Park, Lawrence County



Honorable Mention
Jacob W. Dingel
Butler, PA
Hells Hollow Falls, Hell Run, McConnells Mill State Park, Lawrence County

Waterway Scenics (Impoundments)



First Place
Charles T. Evans
Jefferson Hills, PA
Cranberry Glade Lake, Fayette County



Second Place
James Lindow Sr.
Bridgeville, PA
Farmers Pond, Crawford County



Third Place
Deb Fabel
Gilbertsville, PA
Monroe County lake

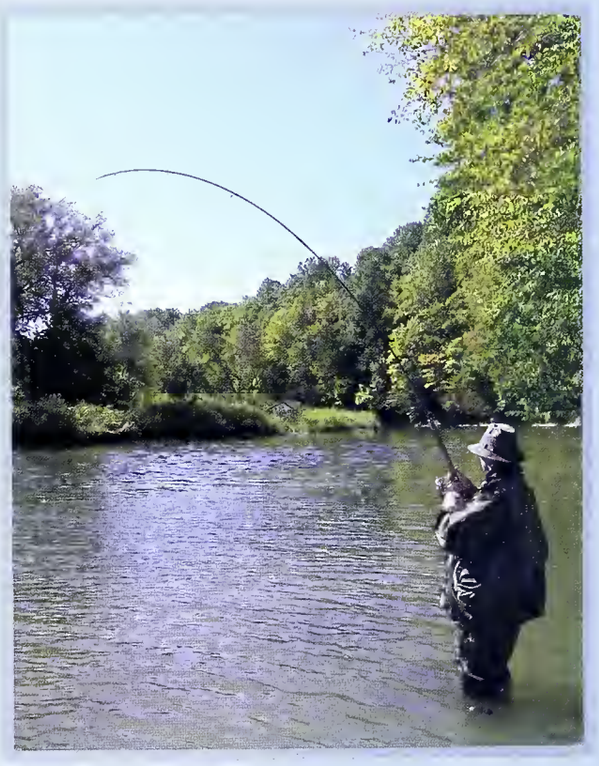


Honorable Mention
Deb Fabel
Gilbertsville, PA
Monroe County lake

Seasonal Fishing and/or Boating



Second Place
Allan A. Klutch
McKees Rocks, PA
Elk Creek,
Erie County



First Place
Denny Puko
Farrell, PA
Allegheny River,
Warren County



Third Place
Garrick Dorsett
Dauphin, PA
Stony Creek,
Dauphin County



Honorable Mention
Howard E. Meyers
Clearfield, PA
Rainbow trout from Penns Creek, Centre County

Family Fishing and/or Boating

First Place
Ron Eberts
Carlisle, PA
Father-and-son fishing team





Second Place
Gary Besmer
East Islip, NY
Grandma and the grandchildren



Honorable Mention
Heidi Pletcher
Mechanicsburg, PA
Father, daughter and daughter's cousin



Third Place
Harold Krieger
Hawley, PA
Grandfather and granddaughter

2007 PFBC Photography Contest

Entry Deadline: December 31, 2007

The 2007 Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Photography Contest is intended to foster a greater appreciation for Pennsylvania's fishing and boating, and aquatic resources.

Contest winners will receive a certificate, the limited-edition magazine 75th anniversary patches, and the limited-edition 2007 nongame species patch. Honorable mention winners will receive a certificate and the limited-edition year 2007 nongame species patch.

The contest now includes a "best in show" selection from all category first-place winners. The best in show winner receives a framed 1991 trout stamp poster. The Commission began issuing trout/salmon stamps in 1991.

Winning entries and honorable mentions may appear in a contest feature article in a future issue of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater*. All entries may also be used elsewhere in the magazine, on the magazine's cover, in Commission publications, on the Commission's web site, and in Commission exhibits and other projects.

The contest will run from March 2007 through December 2007.

View the results of the 2006 contest by clicking the contest link on the Commission web site's main page, at www.fish.state.pa.us.

RULES

- The contest is open to amateur photographers (anyone who makes less than half one's annual income from taking and/or selling photographs).
- Commission employees and volunteers and their immediate family members are not eligible.
- Entries must be original works taken in Pennsylvania, on waterways with public access, and they must have been taken by the person entering the contest.
- Entries must also show adherence to Pennsylvania fishing and boating laws and regulations.
- In photographs, all boaters and anglers in boats must be wearing properly fitted, buttoned and zipped life jackets. It's encouraged that children on shore near the water should wear life jackets.
- Entrants are responsible for securing photo releases from identifiable subjects.
- Entrants may submit only mounted 35mm color slides, color prints in sizes 3 1/2"x5", 4"x6", 5"x7", or 8"x10", or unmounted medium-format and large-format transparencies.
- All submissions must be in color–no black-and-white photos.
- No mounted, over-matted, framed or glassed prints will be accepted.
- Retouched or electronically manipulated entries are not allowed.
- Please do not send negatives or digital files.
- Each photo must include the entrant's name, address, phone number, location of the photograph including county, species identification (if applicable), and category, in addition to a fully completed official entry form on this page for each category entered.
- Multiple submissions are allowed, but participants are limited to a total of two entries per category.
- The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission shall have the right to digitize and use all submissions for publishing, illustration, World Wide Web display, advertising, trade, exhibits and promotion, and in any other use in any medium for any purpose whatsoever without compensation.
- Winning entries (1st, 2nd or 3rd place) from previous Commission photography contests are not eligible.
- Entrants who want their materials returned must include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with the right amount of postage and appropriate packaging to safeguard materials. ***Submissions that do not include return envelopes and postage will not be returned.***

Photo Contest Entry Form

www.fish.state.pa.us

Complete this form with each entry and mail to: PFBC Photo Contest, PA Fish & Boat Commission, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000. The deadline for the Commission's receiving entries is December 31, 2007.

Please Print Clearly

Entrant's Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail (if available): _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Categories

- ❑ 1. Seasonal Fishing and/or Boating (main focus on activity with seasonal backgrounds (snow, ice, fall leaves, etc.)
- ❑ 2. Family Fishing and/or Boating (emphasis on two or more family members)
- ❑ 3. Young Anglers and/or Boaters (photos of anglers and/or boaters less than 12 years of age)
- ❑ 4. Waterway Scenics (Impoundments) (lakes, ponds and reservoirs)
- ❑ 5. Waterway Scenics (Flowing Waters) (rivers, streams and creeks)
- ❑ 6. Reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates (animal closeups or photos with the animals as the primary subject)

I received this form from (check one):

- ❑ *PA&B* magazine
- ❑ the Commission's web site
- ❑ Photo dealer
- ❑ Other (specify) _____

This form may be photocopied.

2006 ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY

Founded in 1866, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission is one of the oldest and most effective conservation agencies in the nation. The Fish & Boat Commission is an independent state government agency with responsibilities for protecting and managing Pennsylvania's fishery resources and regulating recreational fishing and boating.

The agency's governing statute is the Fish and Boat Code of 1980 [Title 30, Pa. Consolidated Statutes]. Fishing and boating regulations are set forth in Title 58, Pennsylvania Code.

Nearly 2 million people fish in Pennsylvania each year. In 2005, the Fish & Boat Commission sold more than 825,963 fishing licenses and 580,650 trout/salmon and Lake Erie fishing permits[1]. Fishing has a tremendous impact on Pennsylvania's economy, generating an economic effect of over $1.65 billion. More than 2.5 million people boat on Pennsylvania waters each year. During 2005, 350,599 boats were registered in Pennsylvania. The Fish & Boat Commission estimates that boating has a total economic impact of $1.7 billion per year.

The agency's mission is "To provide fishing and boating opportunities through the protection and management of aquatic resources."

To accomplish this mission, the Fish & Boat Commission has established four agency-wide goals.

- To protect, conserve and enhance all aquatic resources.
- To provide for the protection of aquatic resource users.
- To address the expectations of anglers and boaters.
- To advocate the wise, safe use of Pennsylvania's aquatic resources.

To accomplish these goals, the Fish & Boat Commission includes an Executive Office that coordinates the policy and programmatic direction for the agency as established by the commissioners. Five specialized bureaus support those functions.

This document highlights major bureau accomplishments in 2006. To view a more detailed annual report, visit the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**.

Executive Office

The Executive Office administers the operations and activities of the entire Fish & Boat Commission. The executive director serves as the chief waterways conservation officer of the Fish & Boat Commission and as an ex officio member of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Environmental Quality Board, the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council and the Boating Advisory Board. The executive director is supported by a variety of staff including the Office of Chief Counsel, Legislative Liaison, Press Secretary, Director of Policy, Planning & Operations, and Human Resources Office.

Among many other activities in 2006, the Fish & Boat Commission worked on extending the capital funds it received under Growing Greener II by developing partnerships to address lake improvement needs. The hatchery improvement projects remain the highest priority for the agency with five projects underway or completed.

The agency's legislative agenda included a wide variety of issues and was active throughout most of the 2005-2006 sessions.

On the Geographic Information System (GIS) front, staff finalized an agency GIS plan, developed key Fish & Boat Commission data layers, executed multiple training sessions for staff—rolling out the technology to more than 40 staff, and continued to provide support to the whole agency and all its program areas.

During 2006, the Office of Chief Counsel continued to provide advice and guidance to commissioners and agency staff on many issues. The office represented the Fish & Boat Commission in litigation before Pennsylvania's courts and administrative tribunals, such as the Environmental Hearing Board. Throughout the year, the office provided legal support for implementation of the point-of-sale system.

A total of 83 press releases were issued through the Fish & Boat Commission's press office in 2006. Release subject materials ranged from administrative matters to general public information and substantial issue-oriented announcements.

The Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**, is administered by



photo-Art Michaels

Douglas J. Austen, Ph.D.
Executive Director

[1]License and special fishing permit sales figures for 2006 cannot be finalized until all outstanding issuing agents have submitted reports.

the Executive Office and continues to solidify its position as the agency's primary mechanism for the distribution of public information. A tracked total of 12,251,204 web pages were accessed in 2006, a 13 percent increase of usage in 2005.

A self-subscribe email alert feature was also introduced to the Fish & Boat Commission web site in 2006. This function allows users to join a bulk email list and automatically receive updated information on subjects of their choosing.

Bureau of Fisheries

The Bureau of Fisheries directs the management, production, protection, propagation and distribution of fish, fisheries, habitat, reptiles, amphibians and certain threatened and endangered/non-game species in the Commonwealth. The bureau also directs the operation of all state fish hatcheries operated by the Fish & Boat Commission. The Bureau of Fisheries represents the executive director and the Fish & Boat Commission at various partner meetings, including the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the In-Stream Flow Council. The bureau also develops and provides briefings and presentations, and relays policy statements. The bureau addresses many environmentally, legally and politically sensitive issues related to the major permitting and permit review functions of the Division of Environmental Services; serves as the Fish & Boat Commission's Lake Erie manager on the international and interstate Lake Erie Committee; and coordinates with the Bureau of Engineering and Development on infrastructure and renovations of the facilities under management of the Bureau of Fisheries.

The Fish & Boat Commission is committed to strengthening the agency's role as a leader in habitat protection and restoration of aquatic ecosystem functions. This increased "agency wide" focus has been initiated in response to the recognized need and increased public demand to conserve and improve aquatic habitat throughout Pennsylvania. It is also intended to fulfill objectives outlined in the National Fish Habitat Initiative (NFHI). In fulfillment of this commitment, the Fish & Boat Commission approved the establishment of the Division of Habitat Management (DHM) in the Bureau of Fisheries during its July 2006 meeting.

The Adopt-a-Stream Program in the Stream Habitat Section worked with 85 cooperators and completed 38 stream habitat enhancement projects including the installation of some 135 habitat structures. The Fish Passage Section's Consultation and Grant Program for Fish Passage and Habitat Restoration Program advanced the completion of 18 dam removal and fishway construction projects resulting in the reopening and restoration of nearly 185 miles of stream habitat for migratory and riverine fishes. Some additional 75 dam removal and several fishway projects continue, and more than $1.5 million of funding assistance has been obtained in the last year to support the completion of these projects.

Fisheries Management Division biologists and technicians sampled 50 river, 29 warmwater stream, 103 transitional stream, and 139 trout stream sections, and 42 lakes.

The Anadromous Fish Restoration Unit hatched, reared and stocked 4.9 million American shad into the Susquehanna, Delaware, Lehigh and Schuylkill rivers and their tributaries. A total of 9.1 million hickory shad fry were released into the Susquehanna and Delaware river tributaries. American shad passage efforts on the Susquehanna River hydroelectric dams continued.

The Fish Health Unit continued to provide diagnostic and disease treatment services to the state fish hatchery system.

The Water Quality Unit developed a laboratory manual and quality assurance/quality control protocols. The unit performed more than 4,500 water tests in 2006 to meet NPDES permit monitoring requirements.

The Cooperative Nursery Unit visited more than 170 sites at least twice annually to provide technical guidance to the sponsors. Eleven prospective new sites were evaluated, and cooperative nursery grant agreements were developed for 32 sponsors.

The Environmental Services Division staff specialists predict risks and assess damages to our Commonwealth's aquatic resources and fishing and boating activities. The division includes three sections—the Watershed Analysis Section, the Aquatic Resources Section and the Natural Diversity Section. Staff continued to provide technical advice to Fish & Boat Commission programs as well as other state and federal regulatory and natural resource agencies.

Bureau of Administration

The Bureau of Administration provides administrative support for all Fish & Boat Commission programs and operations, including issuing and accounting for fishing licenses, stamps and permits; purchasing and procuring supplies, equipment and services; performing fixed asset accounting services; issuing boat registrations and titles; fiscal planning, budget preparation and expenditure, and revenue review; vehicle fleet management; insurance; warehousing and inventory; surplus property management; issuing special permits; mail and messenger services; administering federal grants; managing purchasing and travel cards; selling surplus property; developing and managing information systems; and retaining forms and records.

License sales in 2006 rose by about 1.2 percent from 2005 levels. License and trout stamp sales figures for 2006 will not be finalized until the spring of 2007 when all outstanding license issuing agents have submitted final re-

ports. Nevertheless, sales figures at the end of December 2006 totaled 825,963 licenses. That figure compares with 816,510 licenses for the same period in 2005. Similarly, trout stamps also showed a net increase of a little less than one percent. At this point, it appears that sales in every major license category except the 3-Day Tourist License and the Non-Resident License increased in 2006. As a result, revenue from license and stamp sales was up $348,292 to $23,888,482.

Total boat registration and titling transaction activity fell by less than 1 percent in 2006 to 215,522 transactions. This figure compares with 217,632 transactions completed through the same period last year. While registration renewal transactions were off by less than 1 percent, new registrations fell by 2.7 percent and new title transactions decreased by 6 percent.


photo-Art Michaels

Bureau of Administration staff issued 193 resident and 36 non-resident guide permits during 2006.

During 2006, the Fish & Boat Commission managed some 45 federally funded projects, which returned more than $10.1 million in revenue. While the majority of federal funds ($8.3 million) were received from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, other federal agencies provided the Fish & Boat Commission with financial support. They include the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service; the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration; and U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Coast Guard. The combined total of all federal revenue comprised about 21 percent of the Commission's revenue in the state fiscal year, which ended June 30, 2006.

The process to implement the Pennsylvania Automated License Service continued in 2006 with developing business rules, gathering information, requesting proposal writing, and requesting regulation change and commercial license issuing agent recruitment. This program will greatly change the way the Fish & Boat Commission sells fishing licenses and perhaps renews boat registrations.

Bureau of Boating & Education

The Bureau of Boating & Education is responsible for the development and implementation of fisheries, boating and conservation education and information and public involvement programs geared to enhance fishing and boating opportunities, the aquatic environment and recreational boating safety in the Commonwealth. In support of these activities, it develops diverse educational media capabilities; designs and produces brochures, booklets, maps and pamphlets; provides color lithographic, duplicating and bindery services, and publishes the Fish & Boat Commission's *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* magazine. The bureau administers the agency's aids-to-navigation activities, the certification of passenger-for-hire boat operations, the operation of the North East and Walnut Creek marinas, and the planning and development of a comprehensive boating access and facilities program. The bureau director serves as the Commonwealth's boating law administrator.

In spring 2006 the Fish & Boat Commission initiated the Sportfishing and Aquatic Resource Education Grant program. In this program, the Fish & Boat Commission awards grants up to $5,000 to providers of education programming.

More than 78 Family Fishing Programs (FFP) were scheduled in 2006. Family Fishing Programs provide a family-friendly opportunity through fishing to learn a new skill and improve existing skills. The 55 FFP conducted in 2006 reached 1,628 people.

Some 342 teachers participated in resource education training workshops led by bureau staff in 2006. The majority of these workshops were offered for graduate-level credit or for professional development hours. More than 1,000 classrooms received the Pennsylvania League of Angling Youth newsletter.

Fish & Boat Commission partners and instructors offered angler education programs in 2006 reaching more than 700 participants.

At the end of 2006, 41 fishing tackle loaner sites, most of which are located at state parks, offered fishing rods and reels and terminal tackle for loan.

The bureau received more than 600 requests for the Fish & Boat Commission to present educational/information programs in 2006. The Fish & Boat Commission provided a speaker or instructor for more than 400 of these requests.

The Fish & Boat Commission certified 14,029 students in National Association of State Boating Law Administrators approved boating courses in 2006, of which 12,609 took Fish & Boat Commission courses. The agency and its volunteers taught 133 PA Basic Boating courses with 2,276 students who successfully completed the course. Volunteers and staff also taught 53 Fish & Boat Commission Boating and Water Safety Awareness courses, certifying an additional 2,161 students. In 2006, 12,139 individuals took (11,094 passed) the Fish & Boat Commission's Boat Pennsylvania Internet and correspondence courses.

In 2006 the number of fatal boating accidents spiked to 25 fatalities.

There were 66 boating accidents with 65 injuries reported, the third best year since 1988.

The Fish & Boat Commission certified 1,590 students through 100 courses in its Water Rescue Program in 2006. The Fish & Boat Commission's trained volunteer instructor corps of 159 individuals provided more than 5,400 hours of training this past year. More than 62 courses were taught with a total student enrollment of more than 2,000.

The Fish & Boat Commission designates official Pennsylvania water trails. There are now 19 water trails that have been "built" or are "under construction." In 2006, two trails were completed, including the Juniata River (two sections) and the Delaware River. In this effort, the Fish & Boat Commission partners with other agencies and several local groups.

The Fish & Boat Commission operates an extensive Aids-to-Navigation Program. Currently there are 3,362 permitted structures.

The Educational Media Services Section completed more than 445 work orders in an efficient, timely and cost-effective manner. This on-demand production includes constant inventory replenishment of the Fish & Boat Commission's publications suite. These mainstay products include the *Pennsylvania Fishing Summary, Boating Handbook*, fishing and boating maps, region guides, water trail guides and the Fish & Boat Commission's flagship publication, *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* magazine.

Bureau of Law Enforcement

The Bureau of Law Enforcement directs the enforcement of Commonwealth fishing and boating laws and regulations and certain water pollution laws. Its corps of waterways conservation officers also provides conservation education programs, reviews permits for mine drainage and stream encroachments, administers the Fish & Boat Commission's special activities permits, and participates in fish stocking operations. Officers worked agency displays at more than 20 outdoor sports shows held throughout the Commonwealth. The bureau also operates the Fish & Boat Commission's most active volunteer program, using a force of more than 180 deputy waterways conservation officers.

By December 31, 2006, conservation officers issued and the courts adjudicated 4,748 summary citations for fishing violations and 3,061 summary citations for boating violations. An additional 1,674 summary fish and boat violation citations were filed with district courts in 2006 and are awaiting final resolution. Officers also issued 31,437 warnings for fishing and boating violations and conducted safety boardings on 27,603 recreational boats. The bureau issued 2,530 special activities permits for fishing tournaments and regattas. Officers issued 156 Crimes Code summary citations that were directly related to fishing and boating activities.

Officers conducted 319 investigations involving pollution or encroachments in or along Commonwealth waters.

Total boating-under-the-influence (BUI) arrests for 2006 were 60. Specialized BUI enforcement details were conducted throughout the state on waterways with the highest recreational boating use.

The Northwest Region conducted specialized enforcement involving the return of steelhead to the Lake Erie tributaries during the final three months of 2006 using officers from all over the Commonwealth. The entire specialized enforcement operation resulted in the issuance of 155 citations for violations and 395 warnings.

The bureau held a basic Deputy Waterways Conservation Officer Training Class in 2006 and added 20 new deputies to the current force.

Training presented to the veteran officers included Fish and Boat Code and regulation changes and updates, Act 120 legal updates regarding Title 18 (Crimes Code) and Title 75 (Vehicle Code), policy changes, fisheries management issues and legislative issues. Annual recertification update training at regional levels continued throughout the year to all officers regarding CPR, first aid, firearms day fire, and tactical and dim-light qualifications.

The bureau selected a new class of 10 conservation officer trainees in May 2006.

Bureau of Engineering & Development

The Bureau of Engineering & Development directs the planning, survey, design, construction and maintenance of fishing and boating facilities and property; plans and designs site-engineered structures including roadways and bridges, ponds, raceways and impoundments, wells and pumps, fishways, shoring, piling, docks, wharfs and boat launch ramps; plans and designs buildings for Fish & Boat Commission use; plans, designs and inspects the construction, renovation and major maintenance of dams and impoundments; directs the acquisition, leasing and management of Fish & Boat Commission owned or controlled property; and constructs, renovates and maintains buildings, structures, utilities, dams, impoundments, docks, wharfs, weirs, boat ramps, piers, access areas, roads, parking areas and other Fish & Boat Commission facilities.

The bureau's Property Services Division, which provides real estate and surveying services, engaged in many significant projects.

The bureau's Engineering Division improved hatchery upgrades and provided administrative support to other bureaus, including designs and implementation of Growing Greener II fish hatchery effluent filtration projects, and 40 dam safety inspections.

The bureau's Construction Division engaged in several significant improvements at Fish & Boat Commission facilities.

Recap of 2006 Pennsylvania Boating Accident FATALITIES

by Dan Martin
Boating Safety Education Manager

In 2006, 19 fatal recreational boating accidents resulted in 25 fatalities. This number is 13 more fatalities than the number reported in 2005 and the worst year since 1990. Only three of the 25 victims were wearing personal flotation devices at the time of the mishaps that resulted in their deaths. Two of those victims were killed in one accident by blunt force trauma, so PFD use was not a factor in that accident. Seven victims had wearable PFDs onboard the boat but did not wear them, and in five fatalities there were no PFDs onboard. In three accidents involving six fatalities, the use of PFDs was not applicable, and in three accidents involving five fatalities insufficient PFDs were onboard. The 25 fatalities in 2006 were nearly double the average for the last 10 years (13.2).

1. 1 Fatality

Susquehanna River, Columbia County, 2/11/06, 1:20 p.m., Saturday.

A 30-year-old hunter lost his life when he fell overboard from a borrowed 15-foot open motorboat. The victim dropped another hunter off at an island and was alone when he somehow ended up in the water. The victim wasn't wearing a life jacket, although the boat was properly equipped with PFDs. The water temperature was 35 degrees, so cold water shock and/or hypothermia were probable factors.

2. 1 Fatality

Lake Chillisquaque, Montour County, 2/16/06, 4:30 p.m., Thursday.

A 19-year-old paddler lost his life when the 17-foot canoe he was paddling with two others capsized. The two survivors remained with the overturned boat and were rescued. There were no PFDs onboard. Alcohol may have been a factor. The water temperature was 39 degrees, so cold water shock and/or hypothermia were probable factors.

3. 2 Fatalities

Monongahela River, Fayette County. 4/22/06, 6:25 p.m., Saturday.

A 40-year-old angler and a 35-year-old angler lost their lives when their 16-foot open motorboat capsized below a lock and dam. When the gate opened, the boat capsized, putting both men into the water. One victim was wearing a PFD; the other did not. The water was 58 degrees, so cold water shock was a probable factor.

4. 1 Fatality

Lake Ondawa, Bradford County, 5/14/06, 11:30 a.m., Sunday.

A 16-year-old paddler lost his life when the 15-foot canoe he was paddling capsized. A witness saw the canoe capsize, the victim right it and attempt to reboard. It capsized again and the victim attempted to swim to shore. He began having difficulty and called for help but soon disappeared. The water was 40 degrees, so cold water shock was a factor. The victim was not wearing a PFD.

5. 1 Fatality

Wallenpaupack Creek, Wayne County, 5/27/06, 3:00 p.m., Saturday.

A 48-year-old paddler lost his life when he fell overboard from a 16-foot canoe. The water was 60 degrees, so cold water shock was a probable factor. Alcohol use may have been a factor.

6. 1 Fatality

Ohio River, Allegheny County, 5/30/06, 3:00 p.m., Tuesday.

A 38-year-old man lost his life when he fell overboard from a 17-foot open motorboat. Both people on board were standing because the boat had no installed seats. They were ejected when the boat struck its own wake. The boat traveled about 40 feet up on the shore. The survivor heard the victim calling to him. He swam to the victim, and when they reached each other they both went under. The victim did not resurface. The boat's kill switch was attached to a PFD under the console. Neither person on board was wearing a life jacket, although there were six PFDs onboard. Narcotics were found onboard the boat.

7. 1 Fatality

Pymatuning Lake, Crawford County, 6/9/06, 2:15 p.m., Friday.

A 71-year-old angler lost his life when the 16-foot open motorboat from which he was fishing swamped and flooded. Tests of the boat by the investigating officer revealed that the boat was improperly loaded with too much weight in the stern, which caused water to enter through the scuppers. PFDs were onboard but not used.

8. 2 Fatalities

Neshaminy Creek, Bucks County, 6/10/06, 2:00 a.m., Saturday.

A 47-year-old man and a 28-year-old man lost their lives when the 24-foot cabin motorboat in which they were passengers collided in the dark with a fixed object—a concrete bridge abutment. The vessel then veered toward shore and ran aground. Blunt force trauma from the impact was responsible for the death of one passenger; the other was thrown overboard and drowned, although blunt force trauma was also a major factor in his death. Alcohol was a major factor. PFDs were onboard but not worn, although life jacket use was not a factor in this accident.

9. 2 Fatalities

Lake Erie (Presque Isle Bay), Erie County, 6/16/06, 4:00 p.m., Friday.

A 19-year-old man and a 21-year-old woman lost their lives when their 10-foot personal watercraft collided with a 38-foot cabin motorboat. The victims were the personal watercraft operator and passenger. They were wearing PFDs, but life jacket use was not a factor in this accident.

10. 1 Fatality

Lake Harmony, Carbon County, 6/23/06, 11:00 p.m., Friday.

A 64-year-old man lost his life when he fell overboard from his 20-foot pontoon boat. A couple left a bar and the operator took his new pontoon boat out onto this small lake. His dog had been left onboard while he was in the bar and had had an "accident." The operator decided to clean the dog waste off the bow of the pontoon boat. While the boat was still in gear and moving, he went forward and dipped a bucket into the water. After taking a bucket or two of water, he fell overboard between the pontoons. There were PFDs onboard but not worn; they were still encased in plastic. Alcohol was a factor.

11. 1 Fatality

Farm pond, Mercer County, 6/26/06, 9:30 p.m., Monday.

A 51-year-old angler lost his life when he capsized a 12-foot rowboat on a farm pond. The man was fishing on the pond at night when for some unknown reason he capsized the boat in 4.5 feet of water about 150 feet from shore. He was last seen standing in the boat. The victim could not swim and there were no PFDs onboard the boat. Alcohol was a major factor in this accident, and the victim was in poor physical condition.

12. 2 Fatalities

Allegheny River, Allegheny County, 7/1/06, 8:04 p.m., Saturday.

A 42-year-old man (the boat operator) and a 19-year-old woman lost their lives when their 21-foot cabin motorboat went over the dam at Lock #2 and capsized. There were not enough PFDs to go around for the eight people on board the boat. Alcohol was a factor.

13. 2 Fatalities

Union City Reservoir, Erie County, 7/3/06, 6:00 p.m., Monday.

A 22-year-old angler and his 14-year-old brother lost their lives when the 14-foot canoe in which they were fishing capsized. There were two PFDs onboard for the three occupants and neither unit was worn.

14. 1 Fatality

Lake Redman, York County, 7/16/06, 2:00 p.m., Sunday.

A 32-year-old man lost his life when he capsized his rented 9-foot kayak. He was kayaking with his son on the lake, and for some reason they both capsized and ended up in the water. Neither was a good swimmer and they were having problems staying afloat. Type II PFDs were supplied with the boats but were stashed behind the seats and not worn. Alcohol use may have been a factor.

15. 1 Fatality

Lake Erie, Erie County, 7/22/06, 2:00 p.m., Saturday.

A 53-year-old angler lost his life when he apparently fell overboard from his 20-foot open motorboat. The man was fishing alone on Lake Erie and was either drifting or trolling with an electric motor. Waves increased throughout the day and there were 4- to 6-foot waves on the lake. There was one walleye onboard the boat. The victim probably fell overboard while attempting to land a fish. The victim's boat was properly equipped with PFDs but he was not wearing a life jacket.

16. 1 Fatality

Susquehanna River, Dauphin County, 8/6/06, 2:30 a.m., Sunday.

A 56-year-old man lost his life when his 23-foot open motorboat collided with a 17-foot open motorboat. The victim's boat struck the other vessel nearly head-on in the darkness at a high rate of speed. The force of the collision caused the victim and two passengers on the other boat to be ejected. The victim was not wearing a PFD, although PFDs were onboard his boat. Alcohol was a factor. The victim was killed by impact, so PFD use and swimming ability were not factors in this accident.

17. 1 Fatality

Monongahela River, Fayette County, 8/24/06, 6:45 p.m., Thursday.

A 32-year-old man lost his life when he fell overboard from a 16-foot open motorboat. The victim was a passenger onboard the boat when the motor stalled. The operator and his son began working on the motor and heard a splash. They observed the victim in the water. The operator's son jumped in to assist, but the struggling victim panicked. A throwable PFD was onboard, but the boat operator threw a wearable Type III PFD to the two men. Unfortunately, it fell several feet short. The would-be rescuer was able to break away from the victim and swim to the PFD. He turned to look for the victim but the victim had disappeared. There were only two wearable PFDs onboard for the three occupants. Alcohol was a factor.

18. 2 Fatalities

Ohio River, Beaver County, 9/24/06, 9:30 p.m., Sunday.

A 41-year-old man (the boat operator) and a 48-year-old man lost their lives when their 25-foot cabin motorboat collided with the #4 lock gate at the Montgomery Dam. Alcohol was a factor. Neither victim was wearing a PFD, although the boat was properly equipped. PFD use was not a factor in this accident.

19. 1 Fatality

Clairton Lake, Somerset County, 11/24/06, 2:35 p.m., Friday.

A 52-year-old angler lost his life when his 14-foot canoe from which he was fishing capsized. Two men were fishing from the small canoe when the operator dipped his paddle in the water, causing the canoe to capsize suddenly. The water temperature was 45 degrees, so cold water shock and hypothermia were probable factors. There were no PFDs onboard the canoe. Alcohol was a factor.

2007 State-Fish Art Contest

HOW TO ENTER:

Completed portfolios must be postmarked by March 31 of each year.

Portfolios must include:

❑ A completed entry form.

❑ Artwork of participant's state fish.

❑ One-page composition about participant's state fish, its habitat, behavior or efforts to conserve it. The composition must include the student's name and address.

❑ Entry forms are also available by calling **toll-free 1-877-FISHART (877-347-4278)**. Please allow two weeks by mail. Entry forms will not be accepted by email. Please download or print the entry form at **www.statefishart.com** and send via regular mail.

❑ Entry forms must be completed, signed by a parent or guardian, and glued to the back of the original artwork.

❑ ***Completed entries should be mailed to:***

Wildlife Forever State-Fish Art Contest
2700 Freeway Blvd. #1000
Brooklyn Center, MN 55430

RULES & REGULATIONS:

- The State-Fish Art Contest is open to children in grades four through twelve attending public, private, or home-schools in the United States. Only one entry per child will be accepted.
- Portfolios will be judged on the quality of the artwork.
- The artwork must call attention to the official fish of the entrant's home state. PA's official state fish is the brook trout. The fish must be depicted in its natural habitat. Information about each state fish is available at **www.statefishart.com**.
- All artwork must be the contestant's original, hand-done creation. Photographs and computer-generated artwork will not be accepted.
- All artwork must be 8.5"x11" and horizontal, without a mat, frame, cover sheet, or border. Art techniques may include scratchboard, pointillism, chalk, charcoal, dry brush, watercolor, crosshatch, lead, collage, linoleum printing, or crayon. Please note: If contestants use chalk, charcoal or lead, they should seal the artwork with an adhesive.
- All artwork must not exceed 1/4-inch in total thickness.
- No lettering, signatures, or initials may appear on the front of the design. Any artwork with such identifying characteristics will be disqualified and eliminated from the competition.
- Completed portfolios must include a typed composition or theme paper not to exceed one page in length. Compositions should relate specifically to the characteristics of the state fish, its habitat, behavior, or efforts to conserve it. The composition **must** include the student's name and address.

The "Art of Conservation" Stamp Award

Each year, Wildlife Forever will select one design from all the entries for an interesting, useful and attractive fish stamp. Criteria for selection of the award follows:

- All rules, regulations and deadlines of the State-Fish Art Contest apply.
- The state fish should be the dominant feature of the design and the habitat must be appropriate for your species and state.
- Designs may include fishing-related items.
- Keep the design simple. The image will be reduced to create a stamp.
- Color will be given priority over black and white.
- **Do not** make the design look like a stamp. No numbers or design elements are allowed.

PRIZES:

- All contestants will receive a certificate of participation.
- Three winners from each state will be selected on Earth Day of each year—one winner per grade group (4-6th, 7-9th, 10-12th) for a total of 150 winners (50 states x 3 winners = 150).
- All winning designs will be displayed at the State-Fish Art Expo in the summer.
- All winning designs will be online at **www.statefishart.com**.
- Visit "Prizes" at **www.statefishart.com** to catch the latest information about prizes for the Wildlife Forever State-Fish Art Contest.

THE FINE PRINT:

- The State-Fish Art Contest is not open to the immediate relatives of Wildlife Forever employees or participating sponsors.
- It is the student's responsibility to inform Wildlife Forever of any change of address.

Wildlife Forever:

- Has the right to use the name of any State-Fish Art contestant without compensation.
- Retains ownership of all artwork entered in the contest. In order to promote the Wildlife Forever State-Fish Art Contest, products such as posters, prints, T-shirts, etc., may be produced from winning artwork. Any money realized from the sale or licensing of the artwork will be used to support the contest, wildlife conservation, and education initiatives. The winning artists must provide autographs without charge to Wildlife Forever.
- Will return all other entries upon request after August 31 of the contest year, if the student provides a self-addressed 10"x13" envelope.
- Reserves the right to destroy unclaimed entries after one year.
- Will not insure entries it receives or be responsible for loss or damage of the entries.



PA's State Fish -Brook Trout

WILDLIFE FOREVER STATE-FISH ART CONTEST ENTRY FORM



Important for Teachers:

If part of a classroom project, please fill out teacher and school information before duplicating and distributing to students. Duplicate and glue to back of artwork.

Entries addressed to:
Wildlife Forever, State-Fish Art Contest
2700 Freeway Blvd. #1000
Brooklyn Center, MN 55430

Entry Deadline: Must be postmarked by **March 31, 2007**
Winner Announced: **May 1, 2007**

Grade	❑ 4th ❑ 5th ❑ 6th	❑ 7th ❑ 8th ❑ 9th	❑ 10th ❑ 11th ❑ 12th
Check one:	Group I	Group II	Group III

Please print ar type

Contestant _____
Last Name *First Name* *Birthdate*

Home Address _____
Street ar PO Box

_____
City *State* *Zip*

Telephone ( ) _____ ( ) _____
Hame *Parent Daytime*

Art Entry Title _____

Essay Title _____

Fish Species _____

Art Medium Used _____

Composition Title _____

School and Teacher Information:



Teacher's Name _____ ( )
Schaal Phane

Name of School _____

Street Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

I hereby certify that this is my original work and that it is not a copy of published photagraphs, magazines, baak illustratians, ar other materials pratected by capyright laws. I understand that Wildlife Farever and ather spansars are nat responsible far lass ar damage ta my artwark and/ar campasitian. I grant exclusive right ta Wildlife Farever and its designees ta utilize my artwark and/ar campasitian far repraductian and pramatianal purpases and ta display my art. Alsa, I agree that my artwark and/ar campasitian may be used, altered, ar published as they see fit withaut campensatian ta me.

Signature of Student _____ ***Date*** _____

Signature of Parent, Guardian or Teacher _____ ***Date*** _____

Entry questions should be directed to **brichardson@wildlifeforever.org** *or by calling toll-free* **1-877-FISHART.**
Artwork must be 8.5" x 11" HORIZONTAL and no more than 1/4-inch thick. Do not mat or frame.
Do not have lettering or borders on the front. Visit ***www.statefishart.com*** *for full list of entry guidelines.*

Commission Moves to Secure More Erie County Access

The Fish & Boat Commission will secure an additional 19 acres adjacent to Walnut Creek in Erie County, the latest in a series of acquisitions to ensure public access to Lake Erie tributary streams.

At its January winter quarterly meeting in Harrisburg, the Commission approved the purchase of a trio of properties in Fairview Township, Erie County. The parcels, totaling 19.3 acres, are located south of Route 5 and north of Route 20, between Dutch and Manchester roads. The parcels provide more than 900 feet of frontage along Walnut Creek about 1.5 miles upstream of the mouth in an area that is already heavily used by steelhead anglers just south of the Commission's Walnut Creek property.

The $36,000 purchase will be funded from the Lake Erie Access Improvement Program with money generated by the sale of special Lake Erie fishing permits. This acquisition is the sixth funded through the Lake Erie Access Improvement Program in recent months, securing some 10,000 feet of stream and shoreline for angling. Four of the projects involved pooling funds with other public entities (thereby leveraging Commission funds) with the other two involving purchases by the agency.

In another move to secure public fishing access, the commissioners approved securing an easement to provide better shoreline access to its Canonsburg Lake, Washington County, property.

Also during the meeting, the Commission:

- Voted against extending manadatory lifejeacket wear requriements to boaters in certain small watercraft.
- Proposed a ban on the movement of live fish from the Lake Erie Watershed. This prohibition, if adopted as a final rule, is designed to help reduce the potential spread of aquatic invasive species and disease from the Great Lakes to inland waters. The Commission also opted against increasing the number of licenses for seining bait fish in Lake Erie. Currently 10 such licenses are issued.
- Moved to publish a notice of proposed rulemaking to raise the maximum motor size for boats on Sugar Lake in Crawford County, from 6 to 10 horsepower. Also at Sugar Lake, the Commission is proposing removing miscellaneous special fishing regulations on muskellunge now that a more conservative creel limit applies to musky fishing statewide.
- Supported the publication of a notice of proposed rulemaking to clarify current regulations on Cloe Lake, Jefferson County, prohibiting the use of internal combustion engines.
- Approved an office lease for the Three Rivers Ecological Field Station in Allegheny County.
- Proposed additional reporting requirements for bait dealers selling American eels.
- Added sections of Kettle Creek, Blair County; Sandy Run, Blair County; and Glen Brook, Columbia County, to the list of waters supporting Class A wild trout populations.

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for April 16 and 17, 2007, at the Commission's Harrisburg headquarters. For more information, visit the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**.

Nesquehoning Conservation Club and Nesquehoning Creek

Pennsylvania Angler & Boater magazine is receiving unusual circulation in the Carbon County borough of Nesquehoning. The magazine's January/February 2007 issue testifies to the rebirth of Nesquehoning Creek from a dead rivulet into a clean mountain rivulet home to a growing population of trout.

A few years ago, Nesquehoning Conservation Club began transforming Nesquehoning Creek.

State officials, including State Representative Keith McCall, provided tangible help.

The results became evident when the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission surveys showed the once-dead stream was coming alive and beginning to clean itself. Commission stream surveys conducted in September 1979 from the outlet of Tibbetts Pond downstream 7.76 miles to its confluence with the Lehigh River showed the water devoid of any fish species. However, improvements led to a much different finding when the staff of Fisheries Management Area 5 returned in August 2005. The once sterile water now is home to 20 fish species. Natural reproduction of wild brook trout and brown trout was documented throughout most of the area. Two migratory marine fishes are also present, the American eel and sea lamprey (ammocoete stage, which shows that natural reproduction occurred).

The area of Nesquehoning Creek from the bridge on the eastern end of Industrial Road downstream 2.74 miles to 0.2 miles downstream of the North Mermon Street Bridge was added to the 2007 approved trout waters program. This stream section will be stocked with catchable trout both preseason and in-season. Today, the creek is capable of sustaining itself.—*R. Mickey Angst.*



photo-Spring Gearhart

During this year's PA Preferred® Culinary Connection at the Farm Show, the PA Fish & Boat Commission sponsored "Fishin' from the Kitchen Day." Commission representatives, special guests, and chefs explained where to catch, how to prepare, and how to cook Pennsylvania fish. Left to right: Terry Farner, Huntsdale State Fish Hatchery; Valerie Pritchett, WHTM 27; and Dawson Flinchbaugh, Flinchy's Restaurant Bar and Deck.

Fishin' from the Kitchen

Smoked Trout & Scrambled Egg Crepes

by Wayne Phillips

Try this perfect Sunday brunch treat that brings out the best in smoked trout and creamy scrambled eggs.



photo-Wayne Phillips

Ingredients for four servings:

- ✔ 2 cups smoked trout, broken into bite-sized pieces
- ✔ 4 crepes
- ✔ 8 eggs
- ✔ Butter
- ✔ 2 Tbsp. cream
- ✔ Chives
- ✔ Salt and black pepper

Procedure

Remove skin and all bones from smoked trout. Break it into bite-sized pieces and season with salt and black pepper. Warm the smoked trout and crepes in the oven or microwave. Break the eggs and lightly whip them to combine the yolks and whites. Melt butter in skillet and add eggs. Season with salt and black pepper. Scramble until the eggs are just set. Stir in cream. Chop the chives.

Serve

Place one quarter of the eggs and trout on each crepe. Sprinkle with chives. Roll up crepes. Garnish with more chives. Serve with hash brown potatoes and tomato slices.

Preparing eggs

Perfectly cooked scrambled eggs are terrific with this recipe. Lightly whip the eggs to combine the whites and yolks. Heat a nonstick sauté pan. Add butter. Once it foams, add eggs. Gently shake the pan. Season eggs with salt and black pepper. Stir so that the eggs on the bottom do not overcook. Remove from heat and add a tablespoon or two of cream to stop cooking. The cream also makes the eggs creamy. Overcooking the eggs makes them dry and tough.

Raystown Lake Log Book

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are asking anglers who fish Raystown Lake to participate in an angler log book program. Anglers who fish Raystown Lake, Huntingdon County, in 2007 are asked to obtain an official volunteer angler log book and record specific information about their fishing trips. Commission biologists will use the data collected from the log books to gain a better understanding of the fishing activity at Raystown Lake. This information will be included along with biological assessments in shaping fisheries management plans, including stocking plans for the 8,300-acre impoundment.

To participate, volunteers can obtain an official log book, record their catches for each fishing outing, whether that's one trip or every weekend, and return the book when the fishing season is over. The logs are easy to fill out. Just follow the simple instructions included with each book. Any personal information provided, including catch data, is strictly confidential, although summaries of combined catches by species will be reported at the study's conclusion.

Interested anglers can help the Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers maintain and enhance fishing opportunities at Raystown Lake by obtaining a log book at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Ranger Station at Raystown Lake, the Huntingdon County Visitors Bureau, or participating local bait dealers. Log books can also be downloaded from the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**, or they can be obtained by mail from: Raystown Lake Log Book Survey, John Frederick, Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, 844 Big Spring Road, Newville, PA 17241. The phone number is (717) 776-3170; email johfrederi@state.pa.us.

ANGLER ARCHIVES

We were so taken with rediscovering Fred Everett's work that in 1992 when the original cover painting from the April 1938 issue became available to the Commission again, we reprinted it on the cover of the November 1992 issue. Fred Everett's cover paintings ranged from individual fish species to homey, humorous views of angling life in the 1930s and 1940s. His unique style and cleverness make viewing his work after all these years still refreshing.



Angler's Notebook by Jerry Bush



photo-Jerry Bush

If a trout strikes and then gets away, it will often swim back to the same location but will be reluctant to hit the same bait. You can be confident, though, that something about that particular bait originally appealed to the fish. Here's a little trick that might help trigger a second strike. Cast a similar lure, one that includes a bit of red color, to the same fish. The addition of red sometimes convinces a predator fish that it "wounded" its prey during the first ambush. Its natural response is to return to finish the job.

Don't wade into stream pools immediately after reaching the bank and begin casting baits and lures. It's better to stay low when approaching a pool, analyze it carefully, and first cast into areas planned for wading. Fish that would otherwise have been spooked can often be caught before you enter the water.

Trout, especially stocked fish, often bite on economical, unorthodox baits. Corn kernels, tiny marshmallows, and small pieces of cheese have accounted for many trout that ended up in a creel.

Quality polarized sunglasses are a necessity for stream anglers. You can be skilled at reading water, but nothing is better than actually seeing fish. By reducing surface glare, polarized lenses also let you see submerged obstructions. The glasses will likely pay for themselves by reducing the amount of tackle that otherwise may be lost by snagging underwater obstacles.

Anglers who plan to practice catch and release should use barbless hooks. The absence of a barb makes it easier to remove the hook quickly with minimal handling. Most hook barbs are weak enough either to be snipped with a pair of side-cutters or collapsed with pliers. Of course, nearly all tackle shops carry a good selection of barbless hooks.

Anglers' Legacy Pledge

You probably remember your very first fishing trip and who took you. And odds are pretty good that the experience was directly responsible for why you're still fishing today. You can do your part in giving someone else a great start by visiting the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us, and connecting with the Anglers' Legacy Pledge.

The Anglers' Legacy Pledge is simply a vow to give back what you've been given by introducing somebody new to the activity that you love. There's no membership fee and no obligation. You're just making a promise to do your part to share your fishing knowledge and expertise with someone new.

The Anglers' Legacy program is a project of the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation. The Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to increase participation in recreational angling and boating, and thereby increase public awareness and appreciation of the need for protecting, conserving and restoring this nation's aquatic natural resources. The Fish & Boat Commission has embraced RBFF as a partner because the foundation's mission closely mirrors the agency's own ideals—particularly as they relate to engaging youth. Statistics from the National Survey of Hunting, Fishing and Wildlife Recreation show that in 1980, 26 percent of Pennsylvania youngsters aged 6 to 15 fished. In 1995, that number climbed to 41 percent, but dropped to 35 percent in 2000.

While on the Commission web site, check the "Fishing Fundamentals" section. There you can find tips on basic fishing skills and equipment and places to fish close to home that are perfect to share with beginners.

Commission Confers Awards

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission honored a pioneering scientist, a hands-on conservationist, an innovative sportsman and an educator for their unique contributions that have furthered the work and mission of the Commission. The awards were presented in January during the Commission winter quarterly meeting in Harrisburg.

Dr. Ruth Patrick and Thomas J. Kerr were named recipients of the Ralph W. Abele Conservation Heritage Award.

Dr. Ruth Patrick holds the Francis Boyer Chair of Limnology at the Academy of Natural Sciences and has been an advocate of environmental protection and resource conservation in Pennsylvania and around the world. In the late 1940s, Dr. Patrick developed methods for monitoring environmental health that are now the standard for evaluating rivers and streams. Much of Dr. Patrick's career has been spent studying the main stem of the Delaware and its tributaries and analyzing the effect of human development.

She was one of the first scientists to apply an "ecosystem approach," using a river's biological and physical conditions to evaluate water quality. She was the first environmental scientist to sit on the board of the DuPont Corporation. She served as an advisor on water pollution and acid rain to presidents Lyndon Johnson and Ronald Reagan.

Thomas Kerr is the former chief executive officer of Wildlands Conservancy, one of the largest organizations of its type in the state. He worked extensively with Pennsylvania and United States lawmakers to advance environmental legislation and to fund support for the implementation of Wildlands projects and programs.

Kerr is one of the founding board members of the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association, and he has served on the board of the Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers. In 2002 he led two county-wide initiatives to pass ballot referenda to establish a total of $67 million for open-space and park acquisition. In May 2005 he helped ensure the passage of the Growing Greener II environmental bond fund referendum.

A resident of Kempton, Kerr will be given his award at a later date.

The Abele Award was established to recognize citizens of Pennsylvania who have made outstanding contributions to the protection, conservation and enhancement of the Commonwealth's aquatic resources.

The award serves as a memorial to Ralph W. Abele, executive director of the Pennsylvania Fish Commission from 1972 until 1987.

The inaugural Paul J. Mahon "Access for All" Award was presented to Harry Miller of Latrobe. Miller helped establish the Pennsylvania Sportsmen for the Disabled organization in 1989. Harry, the president of the organization, is the western Pennsylvania spokesperson for disabled people who enjoy the outdoors. He has worked with various organizations and state and federal legislatures to gain support for the disabled.

Through a partnership with the Commission and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Harry developed and implemented a "shoreline enhancement" program that allows disabled persons to fish from shore at Keystone State Park. He received an appreciation award from the Commission for this program. Harry also received the Working for Wildlife Award from the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

The Mahon Award recognizes Pennsylvania citizens or organizations that have made outstanding contributions to improving fishing and boat access to the resource for the disabled. The award also honors Mahon, of Clarks Summit, for his efforts in the field. Mahon served for 15 years as a Fish & Boat commissioner from 1991 to 2006. The hallmark of his tenure was his unflagging efforts to ensure accessibility to Commonwealth waterways for all individuals interested in fishing and boating.

A Commission special service award was presented to Gerry Sechrist of Lemoyne. Sechrist, a teacher and later an aquatics instructor, assisted in adding boating safety to the Cumberland Valley School District's Aquatics Program. Gerry was instrumental in starting the West Shore School District's Boating Safety Awareness Course and the Aquatics Program. In 1998, the West Shore School District won the Boston Whaler Boating Safety Youth Program of Excellence Award.



photo-Art Michaels

Award-winners include (from left) Jerry Sechrist, Commission Special Meritorious Award; Thomas Kerr, Abele Award; Harry Miller, Mahon Award; and Dr. Ruth Patrick, Abele Award.

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Products

Name _____ email (optional) _____

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Wall Chart Sets (17" x 22" - Full Color):	Price	Quantity	Subtotal
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Educational Books:			
(C) Pennsylvania Amphibians & Reptiles	$9.43		
(D) Pennsylvania Fishes	$9.43		
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Please indicate the requested titles with a check mark. Single copies are free. *Limit:* 6 pamphlets.
For multiple copies of the same title, please call the Commission at 717-705-7835.

❑ **Pocket Guide**	*Commonwealth inland waters, Big Bass Program regulations*
❑ **A SmartStart for Safe Paddling**	*Safety Tips for Paddlers*
❑ **Angler Award Program**	*State records, big fish, first fish, rules and application*
❑ **Basics of Water Pollution**	*Types of water pollution, effects on resources*
❑ **Careers with the PFBC**	*Opportunity descriptions, civil service, non-civil service*
❑ **Drinking, Boating and the Law**	*Commonly asked questions with answers*
❑ **Fish Scale Sketch**	*Commission overview, mission and programs*
❑ **Fishing and Boating Map**	*Accesses and amenities, with PennDOT highway map*
❑ **Great Fishing Needs Great Habitat**	*Brochure about habitat components*
❑ **Hazards on the Water**	*Recognizing, avoiding dangers to boaters*
❑ **I Just Bought a Boat, Now What Do I Do?**	*Boat registration's frequently asked questions*
❑ **Paddle Pennsylvania**	*Water trail listings, map and launch permit application*
❑ **PA Fishes Identification Guide**	*Quick reference with illustrations, depicts over 90 fish species*
❑ **Personal Flotation Devices**	*All about life jackets, life vests and life preservers*
❑ **Personal Watercraft in Pennsylvania**	*Vital information for owners and operators*
❑ **Snakes in Pennsylvania**	*Biology, identification, venomous, non-venomous*

Region Brochures-*Fishing & Boating Opportunities in PA*

❑ **NORTHWEST Counties:** *Butler, Clarian, Crawford, Erie, Farest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venanga, Warren*

❑ **NORTHCENTRAL SECTION 1 Counties:** *Cameran, Clearfield, Elk, Jeffersan, McKean*

❑ **NORTHCENTRAL SECTION 2 Counties:** *Centre, Clinton, Lycaming, Mantaur, Narthumberland, Potter, Snyder, Tioga, Union*

❑ **NORTHEAST Counties:** *Bradford, Carban, Columbia, Lawkawanna, Luzerne, Monrae, Pike, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Wayne, Wyaming*

❑ **SOUTHWEST Counties:** *Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Samerset, Washingtan, Westmareland*

❑ **SOUTHCENTRAL Counties:** *Adams, Bedford, Blair, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lebanan, Mifflin, Perry, Yark*

❑ **SOUTHEAST Counties:** *Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lancaster, Lehigh, Mantgomery, Narthamption, Philadelphia, Schuylkill*



PA Water Trail Guides

❑ **Clarion River Water Trail Guide**

❑ **Conodoguinet Creek Water Trail Guide**

❑ **NEW! Juniata River Water Trail Guide-***Upper Section*

❑ **NEW! Juniata River Water Trail Guide-***Lower Section*

❑ **Kiski-Conemaugh River Water Trail Guide**

❑ **Lehigh River Water Trail Guide-***Upper Section*

❑ **Lehigh River Water Trail Guide-***Lower Section*

❑ **Middle Allegheny River Water Trail Guide**

❑ **REVISED! Raystown Branch-***Juniata River Water Trail*

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Allow 3-4 weeks for delivery. Or fax to Educational Media Services at 717-705-7831.
Publication requests can be emailed with publication title(s) and complete shipping information to: ra-be@state.pa.us.

Fishing & Boating Events Calendar

March through June 2007

March 1-4, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission. **World Fishing & Outdoor Exposition**. Rockland Community College Field House, Suffern, New York.

March 2-4, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission. **Erie Outdoor, Sport & Travel Expo**. Family First Sports Park, Erie.

March 2-11, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission. **Pittsburgh Home & Garden Show**. Pittsburgh Convention Center, Pittsburgh.

March 8-11, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission. **PA Garden Expo.** Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg.

March 8-11, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission. **Western NY Sport & Travel Expo**. Hamburg, New York.

March 22-25, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission. **Philadelphia Boat Show**. Philadelphia Convention Center, Philadelphia.

March 31, 2007
The 2007 trout season begins at 8 a.m. in 18 southeastern counties. The counties include Adams, Berks, Bucks, Chester, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Franklin, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Perry, Philadelphia, Schuylkill and York. To locate the trout stocking nearest you, visit **www.fish.state.pa.us**.

April 7, 2007
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission. **Linesville State Fish Hatchery Open House**. Linesville.
Public hours are noon to 4 p.m. There will be scheduled demonstrations on methods used in sorting fish from trap nets, removing and fertilizing walleye eggs, determining the age of fish, filleting and cooking fish, and fly-tying. There will also be many Commission staff displays as well as partner agency displays and fish printing on t-shirts for kids to enjoy. Contact Keith Edwards, 814-336-2426.

April 14, 2007
The 2007 regular trout season opens at 8 a.m. in the rest of the state. To locate trout stocking nearest you, visit **www.fish.state.pa.us**.

May 19 – 25, 2007
National Safe Boating Week. Find out more at **www.safeboatingcouncil.org**.

May 23 & June 7, 2007
Fish-for-Free Days allow anyone (resident or non-resident) to fish legally in Pennsylvania without a fishing license. Each year the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's executive director designates two Fish-for-Free Days. No fishing license is required to fish on Pennsylvania's waterways on these days. All other fishing regulations still apply. Fish-for-Free Days are the perfect opportunity to introduce a friend or relative to the lifelong sport of fishing. There's no better way to enjoy Pennsylvania's great outdoors than a day of fishing with the entire family.

June 2-10, 2007
National Fishing and Boating Week. Find out more at **www.takemefishing.org**.



photo-Art Michaels

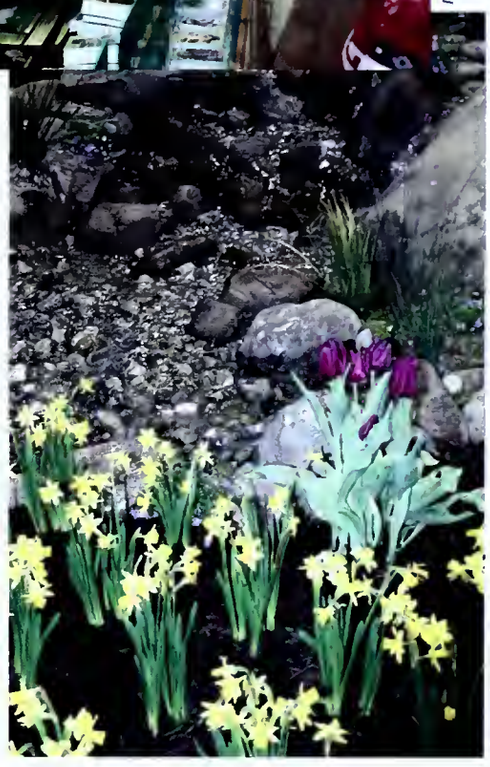


photo-Spring Gearhart

Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission at the 2007 PA Garden Expo at the Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg on March 8-11.



Yellow Breeches, Cumberland County

photo-Spring Gearhart

Cast & Caught

"takemefishing"



David Benner, Allentown, fished Jordan Creek, Lehigh County, last April with a spinner and caught this 24-inch golden rainbow trout. The fish weighed 5 pounds, 2 ounces.



Eugene Godleski, New Kensington, was fishing a spoon last April in Lake Erie and nailed this 19-pound, 10-ounce lake trout that measured 35.5 inches long.



Gregory W. Sprowls, Washington, worked a scented bait in Tenmile Creek, Washington County, last April and caught this 6-pound, 15-ounce rainbow trout. The fish measured 24.5 inches long.



Tom Ferraino, Kittanning, fished Pine Creek, Armstrong County, last April and came up with this 6-pound, 10-ounce rainbow trout. The 22.5-inch fish hit a spinner.



Debbi Murray, Columbia, used a live shiner to fool this 15-inch crappie last April in the Lancaster County portion of the Susquehanna River.



Susan Weltner, Freeport, was fly-fishing the Fayette County portion of the Youghiogheny River last April and caught this 25-inch rainbow trout. The trout took a Green Weenie.



Connie M. Ruff, Connellsville, caught this 2.5-pound brook trout last April in Whites Creek, Somerset County, with a mealworm.



Ken Reese Jr. caught this 2-pound, 14-ounce crappie in Pymatuning Lake, Crawford County, last April. The 17.25-inch crappie went for a jig.



Jesse Wall, Tamaqua, caught this 1.5-pound yellow perch last April in Rabbit Run Reservoir, Schuylkill County. The 13.75-inch perch took a mealworm.

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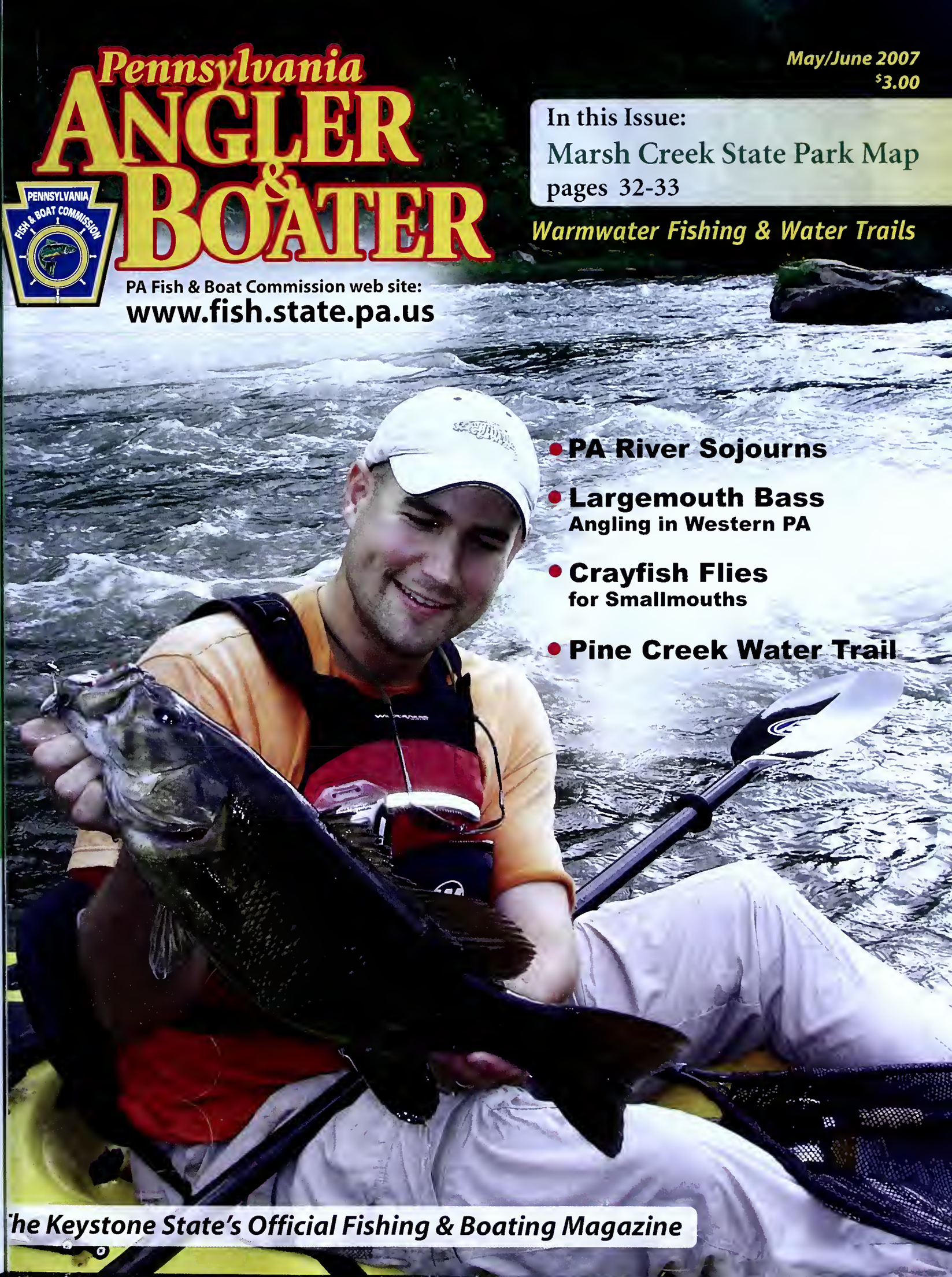
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Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER

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PA Fish & Boat Commission web site:
www.fish.state.pa.us



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- **Largemouth Bass**
  Angling in Western PA
- **Crayfish Flies**
  for Smallmouths
- **Pine Creek Water Trail**

The Keystone State's Official Fishing & Boating Magazine



PROTECT CONSERVE ENHANCE

Making the Outdoor Connection



by Douglas J. Austen, Ph.D.
Executive Director
PA Fish & Boat Commission

RESOURCE FIRST
PROTECT • CONSERVE • ENHANCE

A plague is spreading and it may affect all of us who value our natural resources. It's called the "nature deficit disorder," and Richard Louv, author of the best-selling book *Last Child in the Woods*, has described this as the cutting edge of a changing society, a society that has increasingly lost contact with the natural world to the substantial detriment of all of us and to our natural resources. To learn more about this lost connection, about 350 people from all walks of life gathered in State College last March at the first Governor's Outdoor Conference.

For those of us who had the privilege of participating in the conference, it was a real wake-up call. Many of us were aware of this malady's symptoms. We see an increasingly large portion of our citizens who simply never get out in the woods or on the water. We see fewer kids taking up fishing or hunting as a sport or hobby. We see a lost understanding of the history and role of the sportsman in protecting our natural resources. What really made most of us take notice, though, was how this syndrome is playing out in ways that we simply never fully understood—the threats to our physical and mental health; the uncertain future of fishing, boating, hunting, and bird-watching; and, to be blunt, the concern of future generations for our environment.

Blue Marsh Lake, Berks County



photos-Art Michaels

This topic is vitally important because the next generation will be asked to support open-space efforts and funding for conservation and resource protection, and to vote for laws that will ensure that we have clean water and adequate places to fish, boat, hunt, watch birds, or hike with our families.

For example, researchers examined the development of resource stewards—by that I mean the personal understanding of and dedication to caring for our natural resources. The researchers found that those who hunt and fish or otherwise participate in natural resource-based activities are far more likely to be stewards than those who don't or those who simply read about the outdoors or see it on television.

Furthermore, young people who have the opportunity to participate in well-structured programs that develop skills are more likely to stay involved in the sport and understand the resource on which the sport depends.

Participation is the key, yet we struggle everywhere to make this connection. Why is all this so important? Because the next generation will be asked to support open-space efforts and funding for conservation and resource protection, and to vote for laws that will ensure that we have clean water and adequate places to fish, boat, hunt, watch birds, or hike with our families.

It was clear that in schools the hurdles are enormous and becoming increasingly complex. Lost funding for extracurricular activities is so common that it barely makes the news anymore. I would expect that each of you has read about a school in your area that has cut funding for clubs, music, or sports because of budget constraints. If the schools are increasingly constrained by budgets and administrators are concerned about liability, who can blame them for making

the decision not to venture out to the waterways, wetlands, or woods for field trips or fishing club excursions?

In an academic arena further burdened with mandated testing and highly structured lesson requirements, we must find ways to show that natural resources and outdoor experiences actually can improve learning and academic performance.

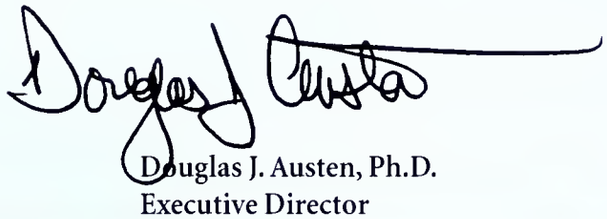
Throughout the two days of intense discussion and presentations, many other barriers to getting people outdoors were identified and solutions proposed. The second day was devoted to panels on nine topics that included competing uses of the resource (think about water skiers and fishermen on a crowded weekend), the future of hunting, sustainable development and open space, and six more challenges.

My assignment on that day was to be a panelist in a session discussing access to the resources. This topic was appropriate considering the challenges that we are facing in the Fish & Boat Commission and that you are all a part of as you look for places to fish or float a boat. What caught me off guard was that my understanding of access was really a narrow perspective on a much larger societal challenge. When it came down to a hard look at my views, it was clear that they were formed from the perspective of a middle-aged white guy who had parents who liked to camp and a dad who took me fishing. That is clearly not the case for the majority of people. I didn't understand the cultural or language issues that many people face. I didn't understand the challenges that inner city schools and families face even in finding a way to get outside, much less recognizing the value of the outdoor experience.

Yes, we are challenged to ensure that there will be public places and willing landowners who will continue to provide access to our lakes and streams. We are also challenged to ensure that all people will be able to find a good place to fish or glide a canoe in a stream or lake that is reasonably close to their home. Fortunately, there are new programs in development and many good people who share the desire to keep their land open to the public. For example, I was inspired by one of my co-panelists, Blaine Puller, who with Kane Hardwoods has kept open to the public more than 126,000 acres of land that the company manages for wood production in northwest Pennsylvania.

We all came out of the conference with the challenge to address these issues and a commitment to follow through with crafting and implementing solutions. To help with this challenge, the Governor has created a post-conference task force, co-chaired by Caren Glotfelty of the Heinz Endowment, and me. Other members will be selected to ensure that the group is focused and diverse, and that it can develop sound and pragmatic solutions. As part of this process, the task force will hold at least five meetings around the Commonwealth to further relay the information presented in State College but primarily to talk about solutions.

It is clear that if we are to treat the nature deficit disorder syndrome, we all need to take action and ensure that we are doing the best that we can to keep these connections alive for generations to come.



Douglas J. Austen, Ph.D.
Executive Director



Pine Creek, Potter County

We see an increasingly large portion of our citizens who simply never get out in the woods or on the water. We see fewer kids taking up fishing or hunting as a sport or hobby.

We see a lost understanding of the history and role of the sportsman in protecting our natural resources.

Casting Around

Gently Down the Stream

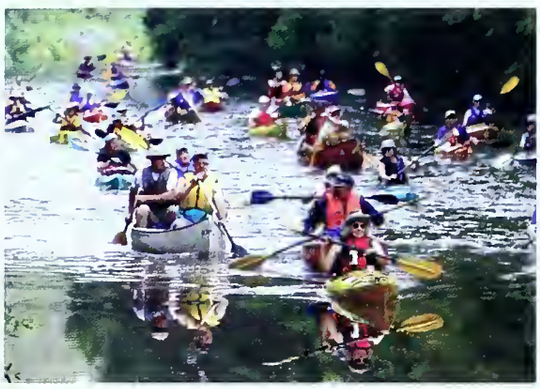


photo-courtesy of POWR

May and June are the unofficial beginning of the "boating season," and this issue offers plenty of paddling and powerboating pieces to help you along your way. On **page 7** we spell out some of the fishing opportunities you'll find now on the Middle Allegheny River Water Trail, and on **page 35** you can learn about all of Pennsylvania's river sojourns and how to participate in them. See **page 11** for information on getting your powerboat rig ready and how to create a boating checklist to help you ensure that your trip goes without incident. On **page 14** check the information on the Pine Creek Water Trail, and use the information on **page 51** as a reminder on ATON (aids to navigation).

Anglers who like to tangle with muskies and pike will want to check **page 18**, this issue's "Angler Profiles" installment on musky fishing expert Howard Wagner. The article on **page 8**, by regular contributor Mike Bleech, shows us how and where to tempt muskies and northern pike on the Middle Allegheny River Water Trail. Smallmouth bass enthusiasts should read the article on **page 46** on how to catch smallmouths with crayfish flies. See **page 40** for ideas on where to fish for largemouth bass in western Pennsylvania.



photo-courtesy of Howard Wagner

On **page 26** read how to tie a Green Drake, and on **page 27** take in suggestions on how to fish this fly.

On **page 52** discover the method by which timber rattlesnakes ambush their prey, and learn how a program known as "SWG" helps Pennsylvania's amphibians and reptiles.

Deputy waterways conservation officers (DWCOs) work with WCOs performing mainly specialized law enforcement duties in protecting, conserving and enhancing our water resources. Every year WCOs and DWCOs select a "Deputy of the Year" in their regions. On **page 28** meet the DWCOs honored with this distinction.

Panfish action improves now, too. See regular contributor Darl Black's article on **page 48** for details on how to find large bluegills and how to tempt them. Anglers catch a lot of big channel and flathead catfish in the lower Allegheny River, so turn to **page 44** for regular contributor Jeff Knapp's tips on where to find these brutes and how to get them to bite.—*Art Michaels, Editor.*

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Warmwater Fishing & Water Trails

The Keystone State's Official Fishing and Boating Magazine

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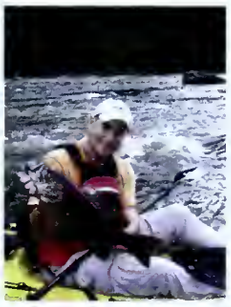
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On the cover

This issue's cover photo shows an angler with a nice smallmouth bass that the angler caught from a kayak. Photo by Jeff Little.



MAIL

Special recognition

I think it's necessary to recognize one of your WCOs, McKean County's Pete Mader. My father and I have done most of our trout fishing in northcentral Pennsylvania over the last 50 years. Since my retirement last year, we ventured farther north into McKean County and began fishing Marvin and Potato creeks. While helping at the preseason and inseason stockings last spring, we observed that the stockings in Pete's jurisdiction were very well-organized, especially the float stockings that spread the trout out to allow for more fishing opportunities throughout the year.

I have never met a more dedicated and personable WCO than Pete in all my years of fishing. Because we were new to the streams in McKean County, he always found time to address our questions and concerns, and he even recommended some good areas where we might fly-fish.

It would certainly be advantageous for the trainees in future WCO classes to follow Pete's example of establishing good public relations and to stress its importance in their new assignments across the state.—*Paul M. Kosko, Sykesville, PA.*

Susquehanna River boater

I am an avid Susquehanna River boater and cottage owner on Beech Island in Londonderry Township, on the river. I am writing to you to let you know about the great work your enforcement officers, both employed and volunteer, have been doing on the river.

Over the past five years, I have been stopped three times by your officers. They have always been calm, courteous, helpful, and in a word, professional. The reasons for which I have been stopped have always been legitimate, with my safety and the safety of my passengers, or other boaters, in mind. All of the times any problems have been some sort of boneheaded oversight on my part as a boater. The counsel that they have offered during the stops has always been useful, on point, and for my own good.

I would like to express my appreciation to you and your staff for keeping our safety not only foremost in their minds but ours as well.—*Daniel Lysaght, Dauphin, PA.*

75th anniversary

I read with interest your article "75 Years and Counting," by Ted Walke (Nov/Dec 2006 *PA&B*). Your magazine has evolved over the years, changing with the times, though always maintaining high standards. Through the magazine articles the public has a great resource of information on conservation and fishing and boating in Pennsylvania. The article noted that some readers have maintained their subscriptions for up to 21 years, but actually some of us have been loyal subscribers longer than that. I started my subscription in May 1964, and I actually have every issue since then. It is interesting to look back at some of those older issues. Thank you for your fine publication.—*Roger Jamieson, Landenberg, PA.*

Fond family memories

The Celli family has been happy subscribers to your wonderful magazine for many, many years. Enclosed is a photo of James D. Celli Jr. with a largemouth caught in the Jim Thorpe area. James, or "Uncle Jim," was also a subscriber and an avid fisherman all his life. Unfortunately, James died unexpectedly a few years back, leaving a huge void in our family. Thankfully, the rest of his family and I have very fond memories of him, with many great days spent fishing lakes and streams.

James was a catch-and-release fisherman, so the monster largemouth bass in the photo was never measured or weighed. Could you take an educated guess on the length and weight of the bass? James was about 5 feet, 8 inches tall and weighed about 170 pounds.—*Ron Celli, Blackwood, NJ.*

Thanks for sharing this item with us. We love to see and hear about family fishing and boating memories—the more distant with photographs, the better! The largemouth bass appears to be about 5 pounds.

If you'd like to estimate the weight of other bass or other fish, visit the Commission's weight-length estimators on the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us. On the web site's main page, enter "weight-length" in the search option.—*Ed.*



photo-courtesy Ron Celli

James Celli with a nice largemouth bass that weighed about 5 pounds.

Cast Away

The Middle Allegheny River Water Trail's Great Fishing

by Art Michaels

Anglers on the Middle Allegheny River Water Trail will find action for smallmouth bass, walleyes, muskellunge, northern pike, flathead catfish, rock bass and in the section from Kinzua Dam downstream to the Warren area, brown and rainbow trout. The 8.75-mile section from Kinzua Dam to the confluence of Conewango Creek is managed with miscellaneous regulations. It has a 14-inch minimum size limit with a two-per-day creel limit for trout during the period from opening day of the regular trout season through Labor Day. For the remainder of the year until the next opening day of the following year, it is catch and release. There are no tackle restrictions.

Commission Area Fisheries Manager Al Woomer says that this section of the Allegheny River holds trout because of the relatively cold water released from Kinzua Dam. "Anglers catch some really big brown trout in this section," Woomer says. "Trout fishing is in full swing during May and June. The release at the dam and the flow in the river are key in this section, so it pays to call ahead to Kinzua Dam for the river forecast."

Visit the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Kinzua Dam web site here: www.lrp.usace.army.mil/rec/lakes/kinzuala.htm, or call 814-726-0164 for Kinzua's lake and recreation information.

Fly-fishing is one of the most popular fishing methods through this stretch, but lures, spinners and live bait are also used. Try floating crankbaits and retrieve them at a moderate pace with occasional firm twitches.

"For most of the Allegheny River between Kinzua Dam and Emlenton, smallmouth bass are the most popular fish sought, although the harvest season doesn't start until mid-June," says Woomer. "A wide variety of lures and bait is used, including spinnerbaits, minnow-types lures, jigs and live bait like minnows and crayfish." Woomer also says that anglers seine some of the best live baits, including various minnows and shiners, from the river and use them to catch smallies.

In addition, rock bass grow to an ample size in the river. They can be caught easily on lures and spinners.

"Walleye fishing is probably more popular in May with the season opening May 5, and it gets harder as summer approaches and the river warms up," says Woomer. "But walleyes are available even then for anglers who can figure out how to catch them. Jigs with minnows are a favorite along with blade baits."

Muskies are commonly caught throughout this stretch of the Allegheny River, and occasionally they reach 50 inches. Big musky lures are the primary gear along with bucktail jigs. Northern pike are also commonly caught and are usually much more likely to hit a variety of baits and lures than are muskies. For more information on musky and pike fishing in the Allegheny River, see page 8 in this issue.

"Flathead catfish are in the river's deep pools and eddies, and night fishing with a chub off the bottom works best," Woomer says. "Late July and August are usually the best times for them, but some might be caught in early summer. Anglers also catch some channel catfish."



photo-Art Michaels

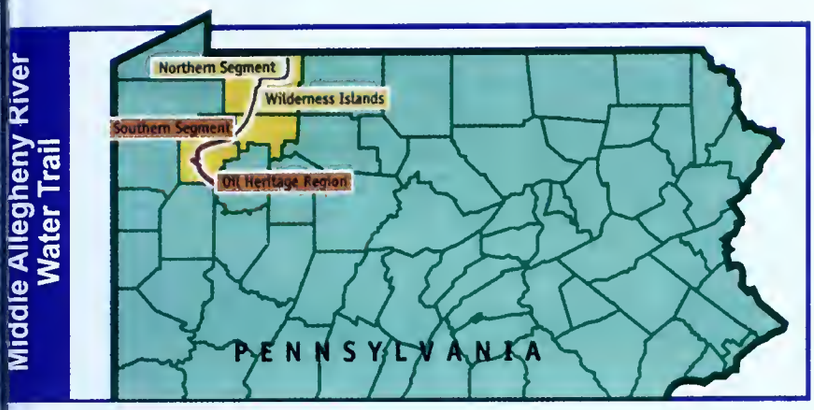
Allegheny River near Tidoute, Warren County

More information

The Middle Allegheny River Water Trail guide is a free publication among other water trail guides available from the Commission. Visit the Commission's water trail pages online on the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us. On the left side of the web site's main page, hold your cursor over "Boat," and in the drop-down menu, click on "Boating Near You." Then click on "Water Trails." View, print or download individual water trail guides.



Pike fishing improves as you move down river through the Warren area. Two major pike spawning areas are in the Conewango Creek and Brokenstraw Creek watersheds. The Conewango meets the river at Warren, and the Brokenstraw flows in at Buckaloons.



Water Trail Muskies and Pike

by Mike Bleech *photos by the author*

The Allegheny River, and in particular, the area encompassed by the Middle Allegheny River Water Trail, 85 miles from Kinzua Dam to Emlenton, is one of the most underappreciated Esocid fisheries in the country. Surely it ranks, if not recognized nationally, as top echelon.

Immediately after passing through the gates of Kinzua Dam, which creates the reservoir, the Allegheny is first-rate trophy musky and pike water. The tailwaters are one of the more popular fishing hotspots on the river. It is one of the better places for musky and pike fishing from the banks. Several muskies longer than 50 inches have been caught here.

From late spring through early fall, muskies might be caught just about anywhere in the tailwaters. One particularly good spot is at the new handicapped-access fishing pier adjacent to the Allegheny National Fish Hatchery. When the water is colder, concentrate on working the calmer areas.

Pike fishing is sporadic in the tailwaters. Probably the best section is from the circular overlook at the Big Bend Recreation Area upstream toward the power plant between the main current and the bank.



Musky fishing is very good for almost the entire length of the Middle Allegheny River Water Trail below Port Allegany, but it is the middle Allegheny that is probably best in terms of your chances of hooking a musky because reading the water is easier.

Pike fishing improves as you move downriver through the Warren area. Two major pike spawning areas are in the Conewango Creek and Brokenstraw Creek watersheds. The Conewango meets the river at Warren, and the Brokenstraw flows in at Buckaloons.

In the Conewango Watershed, a project to restore Akeley Swamp, on State Game Lands 282, holds great promise for maintaining or even improving pike fishing in the Middle Allegheny. Part of this cooperative project, which involved the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Ducks Unlimited, the Warren County Council of Sportsmen's Clubs, and other groups and individuals, was the construction of a fish passage device that allows pike to enter the swamp to spawn.

This same stretch of the Allegheny might be the very best section for the biggest muskies. For some years the largest muskies reported in the Commission's Angler Award Program were caught here.

Musky fishing is very good for almost the entire length of the Middle Allegheny River Water Trail below Port Allegany, but it is the middle Allegheny that is probably best in terms of your chances of hooking a musky because reading the water is easier.

Actually, the larger pools downriver and into the lock-and-dam navigation system provide considerably more musky habitat. This habitat extends down into the Ohio River, where musky fishing is improving. A few anglers specialize in musky fishing in this area, and as word spreads about this fishery and as the number of serious musky anglers increases, so will the area's reputation.

The Middle Allegheny is a series of riffles and pools. Muskies inhabit mostly calmer water in the pools.

During the warmer months, they might be just about anywhere in the pools. Cover including fallen or sunken trees, boulders and manmade structures tends to be the more likely places where you'll find muskies. On some occasions muskies venture up into the lower ends of the riffles if there is adequate depth, but only smaller muskies usually make these forays.

Once the water temperature starts dropping through the 40s during fall and continuing until muskies go into their spawning mode, they will concentrate in those areas where current is mild—places such as coves, below islands, on the downstream side of boulders, or near anything else that breaks the current.

Muskies are at the top of the aquatic food chain. Virtually anything they can swallow is potential prey, including just about any fish, small ducks or any other creature that swims. So musky lures can imitate any of these things, but the more popular musky lures are fish imitations. Probably the preferred musky prey is soft-rayed fishes including suckers and carp. It follows that some of the better musky lures are colored like these fishes. Perch color patterns and fire tiger are also productive in the Allegheny River, but there is no need to limit your lure assortment to these colors. Who knows what might trigger strikes?



A two-day float between the Fish & Boat Commission accesses at Starbrick and Tionesta is just about as good as river musky fishing gets.

Many muskies are hooked on lures intended for bass or walleyes. But if you are serious about catching big muskies, stick with lures that are at least 7 inches long.

Pike inhabit virtually the same niche in the Allegheny River as muskies, so the same fishing tactics will catch them. If pike are your primary goal, however, a slight downsize in lures might be in order. At least you can anticipate more action with lures in the 5-inch to 7-inch range since pike are generally smaller than muskies. Still, if big pike are your goal, go with larger lures. A reasonable number of Allegheny River pike exceed 36 inches in length.

Float-fishing is the best approach to musky fishing in the Middle Allegheny, at least in the upper end of this section. A two-day float between the Fish & Boat Commission accesses at Starbrick and Tionesta is just about as good as river musky fishing gets. This is a first-rate adventure when combined with camping on the Allegheny River Islands Wilderness.

Contact the Allegheny National Forest, P.O. Box 36, Warren, PA 16365; phone (814) 723-5150, for information about the wilderness islands.

Trolling is an excellent tactic in the larger pools and in the lock-and-dam system simply because it covers a lot of water. Trolling also allows the use of larger lures with less fatigue. Perhaps the most important factor to be considered when choosing trolling lures is running depth. While muskies may use the entire water column, your chances for strikes are better close to the bottom. But "close" in musky terms is not as close as when you are dealing with bass or walleyes. Keeping lures within 3 feet of the bottom is adequate.

Trolling speed or retrieve speed when casting is also important. Newcomers to musky fishing typically fish much too slowly. You can't reel too fast for muskies.

Joe Martinelli is an Allegheny River musky specialist. This Pittsburgh angler won the 2006 Pennsylvania State Championship Fishing Tournament with a catch that included two muskies and a pike in the preliminary round, and then two pike and a musky in the finals.

According to Martinelli, "I speed up in the summertime, even up to 6 mph."

With the right pike and musky fishing tactics in the Allegheny River, your chances of catching the fish of dreams is a realistic goal.

Musky Pages

"Musky, the Biggest Fish You're Going to Catch in PA" is the title of the Commission's web pages on muskellunge. On these pages you'll find listings of musky hotspots divided into segments or large reservoirs/lakes, medium reservoirs/lakes, and large rivers. You can also view a complete list of Pennsylvania waters ranked by muskellunge population density. You'll also find a wealth of items on the Commission's managing muskies, including locations of musky stockings; musky and tiger musky management overview; regulations; species overview with characteristics of identification, habitat and life history; biologists' reports; and links to other musky web sites. Other sections include articles from *PA Angler & Boater* on how to catch muskies and details of musky catches from the Commission's Angler Award Program.

View, download or print all of these materials on the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us. Enter this link into your browser: http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/musky.htm.

BOATING PREP MADE EASY

by Chris Gorsuch

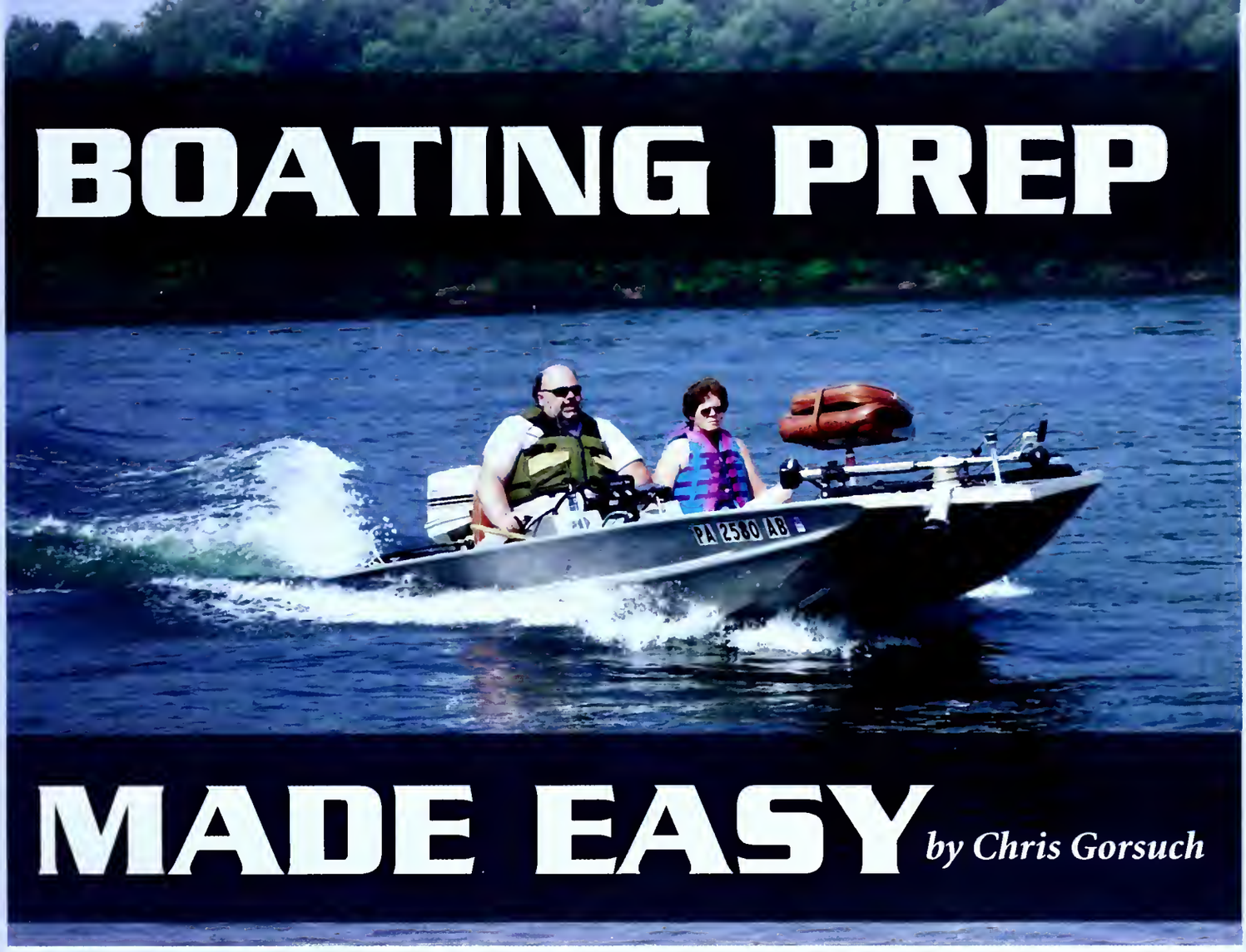


photo-Art Michaels

A few years ago a friend called the night before a fishing trip because he wanted to cancel. When I asked why, he said only that there wasn't enough time to get his boat ready. He was new to boating, and getting the boat ready was an unpleasant chore that took too much time. I suggested we take my boat instead; the fishing trip was back on. The next day I spent time with him going over ways to make boat preparation easy and far less of a chore. I shared some of my preparation routine and ways to combine gear and tasks to reduce time and effort and most of all, eliminate the anxiety of preparing his boat for a trip.

Few procedures can eliminate the time and effort of boat prep as can starting with a prescribed routine and a thorough checklist. The problem with most boating checklists is that they aren't personalized or focused on each boater's specific needs. I recommend breaking the gear and preparation steps into smaller parts to make the pre-trip checklist itself shorter and easier to run through.

For me, preparation for the next trip starts before the current trip ends. I keep a small garbage bag in the boat to collect spent soft plastics, old fishing line and sandwich wrappers. Once the boat is on the trailer and in the tie-down area, I remove the trash and gear from the boat to the truck, and after I secure the boat to the trailer, I'm on my way.

On the way home, I stop to fill the boat's fuel tank. It is easier than trying to find an open service station the morning of the trip or running out the night before. Use time wisely and eliminate turning simple tasks into chores. While filling, I check the two-cycle oil reservoir, grease my jet pump and check my trailer tires. I check that the tires are properly inflated and quickly check that the lug nuts are tight.



photo-Chris Gorsuch

A small plastic crate kept in the tow vehicle all season long makes boat preparation items easy to access.

What makes this easy is the small plastic crate that occupies space in my tow vehicle all season long. It contains all the items I need at arm's length, instead of running back and forth between the house and the garage the night before a boating trip. Your needs may be different, but the principle is the same. Keep supplies and tools for this part of boat preparation easy to access. The crate contains the following items.

- ✓ Gallon of two-cycle oil
- ✓ Small grease gun
- ✓ Can of penetrating oil

- ✓ Lug wrench and tire gauge
- ✓ Tire plugs and can of flat-fixing formula
- ✓ Shop rags

When I arrive home, one of the first things I do is plug in the battery charger. This helps add longevity to the batteries and keeps me ready for the next trip, whether that's the following day or not until next weekend.

Next, I prefer to keep my on-boat gear in two easy-to-carry, compact bags. Waterproof boat bags are perfect for keeping moisture away from the gear. They are quite durable and come in a variety of sizes, shapes and colors. Water-resistant boat bags with compartments are best because they allow quick access to items. I keep two bags—one that needs to be reached each trip and another for those safety and emergency items I hope never to need.

By keeping these two bags, I can shorten my checklist and know that I've stowed the correct gear just by having these bags on hand. The two boat bags also help to consolidate items on my pre-trip checklist. Preview the lists below and individualize a daily use bag and a safety/emergency bag for your own boating needs.

My daily use bag contains items that I expect to use during each trip. The bag contains items that will go in and out of the bag during the outing.

Daily use bag

- ✓ Sunscreen
- ✓ Pliers and folding knife
- ✓ Camera
- ✓ Cell phone
- ✓ Handheld GPS or compass
- ✓ Energy bars
- ✓ Shop towels
- ✓ Extra boat plugs
- ✓ Lanyard and spare boat key
- ✓ Spare truck key
- ✓ Shop rags
- ✓ Rain jacket

Another group of gear that goes together is the safety and emergency items. I don't use these items on every trip, but they need to be onboard so that when they are needed, they are accessible and easy to find. A vinyl boat bag provides a compact, water-resistant container for these items. My emergency bag contains just the basic gear.



photo-Chris Gorsuch

Another group of gear that goes together is the safety and emergency items. I don't use these items on every trip, but they need to be onboard so that when they are needed, they are accessible and easy to find.

Safety/ emergency bag

- ✓ First aid kit
- ✓ Flares and extra sound device
- ✓ Small tool kit
- ✓ Flashlight and spare batteries
- ✓ Shear pins, spark plugs and spare fuses
- ✓ Duct tape
- ✓ Roll of toilet paper
- ✓ Waterproof matches and fire starter kit
- ✓ Bug repellent
- ✓ Aspirin/pain reliever
- ✓ Extra sunscreen

When I'm getting ready for a trip, I stow the two bags in minutes and with the pre-trip fueling and battery charging the trip prep time to get ready is now down to a few minutes. The chore of gathering gear and working through a long checklist or worrying about forgetting essential items is a thing of the past. Once I couple the boat trailer to the tow vehicle's hitch, I can go over my checklist and do my walk-around. It's quick and easy, and makes getting ready for any trip a breeze.



photo-Chris Gorsuch

My daily use bag contains items that I expect to use during each trip. The bag contains items that will go in and out of the bag during the outing.

Checklist

Keep the pre-trip or walk-around checklist simple. It can usually be done with a dozen items to check through. With the gear stowed in the boat, take a few minutes to do a walk-around to make sure everything is in order for a safe, fun day on the water.

- ✓ Trailer coupler locked

- ✓ Trailer lights plugged in
- ✓ Trailer lights checked
- ✓ Trailer safety chains crossed and hooked
- ✓ Bow safety chain hooked
- ✓ Transom straps secure
- ✓ Daily use bag stored
- ✓ Safety/emergency bag stowed
- ✓ PFDs per passenger
- ✓ Type IV throwable device
- ✓ Water, snacks and lunch

Remember that there's a proper way to hang the safety chains so that they won't slip or unhook if the coupler fails. First, cross the chains and hook the chain from under the frame clip. The open end of the chain hook should face the boat, not the front of the tow vehicle. The chains are crossed so that they will cradle the trailer coupler and keep the tongue off the ground.

Remember periodically to check the condition of the onboard PFDs. Check for tears in the fabric or the straps and replace if necessary. If the boat requires a fire extinguisher, check the dial to make sure it's charged. If the waterway requires flares, make sure that yours haven't expired. But don't discard expired flares. You probably can still use them in an emergency. They just don't count toward the legal requirement.

Ensure that the sound-signaling device is functional and that it's in hand's reach.

Time on the water in a boat should be a pleasant experience. A solid preparation routine helps you make each aspect of boat ownership safe and enjoyable.



photo-Dennis Tubbs

Time on the water in a boat should be a pleasant experience. A solid preparation routine helps you make each aspect of boat ownership safe and enjoyable.

SAVED BY THE JACKET

Boat Explodes, Life Jacket Saves the Day

Although it happened over a dozen years ago, Linda Sullivan Spies often thinks about the day she was thrown right out of her seat when the large boat she was riding in blew up. She credits a life jacket with saving her life after she was injured and disoriented in the water.

"I was aboard a 47-foot sport fisherman that exploded," she recalls. "I was on the flying bridge where a box of life jackets was stored. When the boat exploded, the bridge and the three people on it flew up into the air. They came straight down aboard the boat, which was engulfed in flames."

"The three of us grabbed life jackets and immediately jumped overboard," she said. "When I tried to put on the life jacket, I realized that I'd dislocated my right shoulder."

Ms. Spies was able to struggle into the life jacket. She drifted in the water with her companions until they were rescued.

"Dressing in heavy clothing and unable to swim because of my injuries, I certainly would have died if it hadn't been for that life jacket."

Pennsylvania doesn't have many 47-foot boats with flying bridges. Still, the life jacket lesson applies to all boats.



PINE CREEK Water Trail



by Jim Hyland

Pine Creek is one of Pennsylvania's most scenic and historic water trails.

When not able to navigate the swift waters by canoe, native peoples walked an ancient footpath along the shore. Described as a "howling wilderness" by early pioneers, the Pine Creek Gorge and lower valley still offer an amazing natural experience to paddlers.

While navigating Pine Creek, one can't help but imagine what it must have been like some 200 years ago, given how spectacular it remains today. Historical accounts of the area describe huge pines and hemlocks, maybe 8 or 10 feet in diameter, and massive American chestnuts. The commercial value of those trees would bring significant and sometimes devestating change to Pine Creek's shores.

Water-powered sawmills began to appear as early as the 1790s, and scores more steam-powered mills came and went with the various floods of the 1800s. Massive logs were muscled into the creek and individually floated to distant markets, while others were lashed into huge rafts that even had their own living quarters!

Wildlife abounded, too. Herds of elk grazed on the shores, and panthers prowled among the high rock outcrops. The pools were full of native brook trout, and American shad seasonally migrated from the Atlantic. Like the shad, each year hundreds of people return to the creek to capture the profound experience of flowing with cold, clean mountain water downstream to the ocean.

Pennsylvania Official Water Trails

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission is the sole agency that designates official Pennsylvania water trails. However, individual trails and trail corridors are created and maintained by a network of volunteers, property owners, civic groups and associations. If you or your organization would like to create a water trail, or if you'd like to nominate an existing water trail for recognition as an official Pennsylvania water trail, contact the Commission by calling 717-705-7800 or on the web at **http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/inform.htm**. Visit the water trail pages on the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**.

Planning your trip

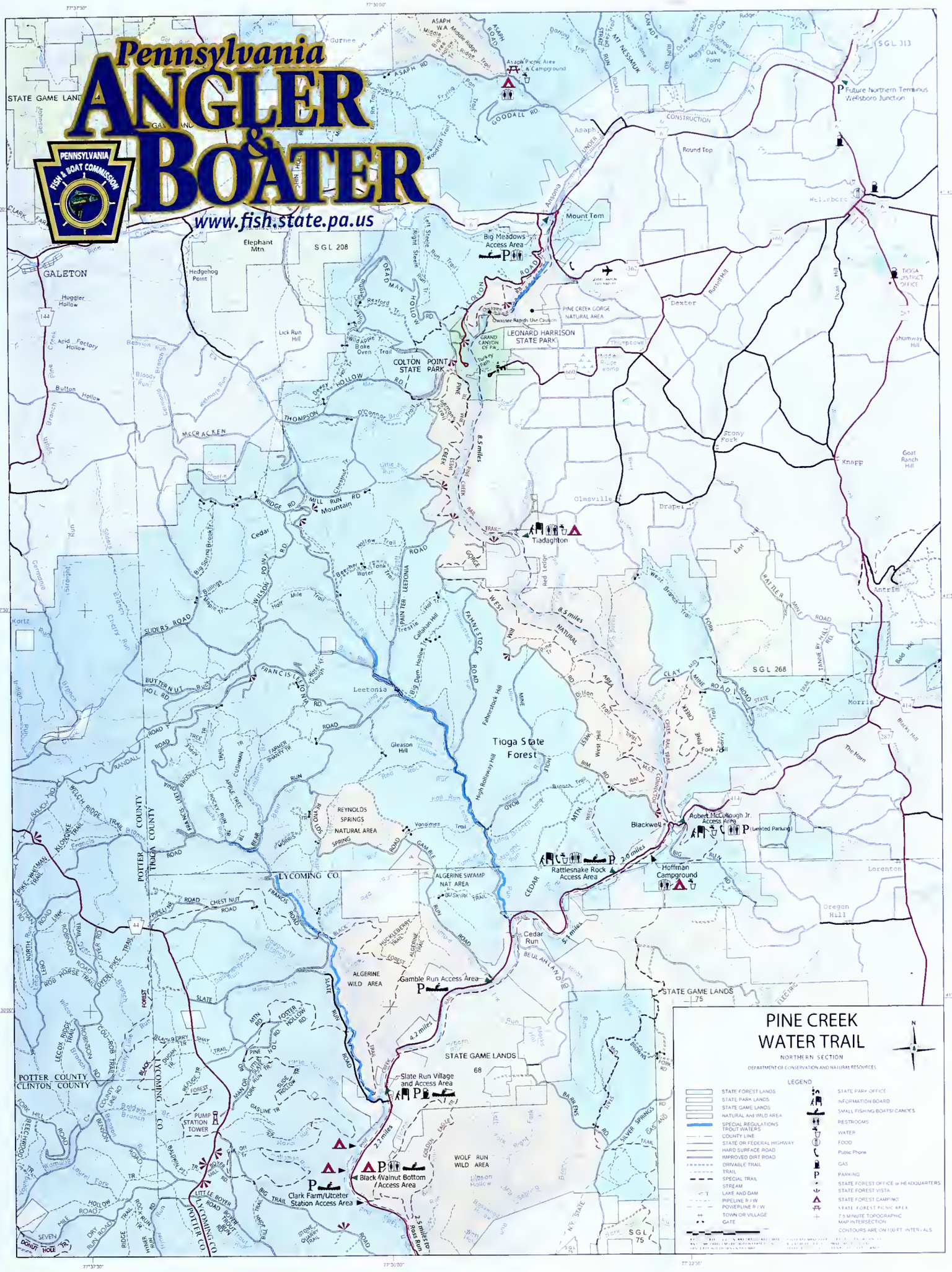
Although Pine Creek can be paddled safely from Galeton, the Pine Creek Water Trail begins at the Big Meadows Access Area near Ansonia, Tioga County. Located closer to where Pine Creek plunges south into the Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania, and having adequate public parking, it's an appropriate place to begin.

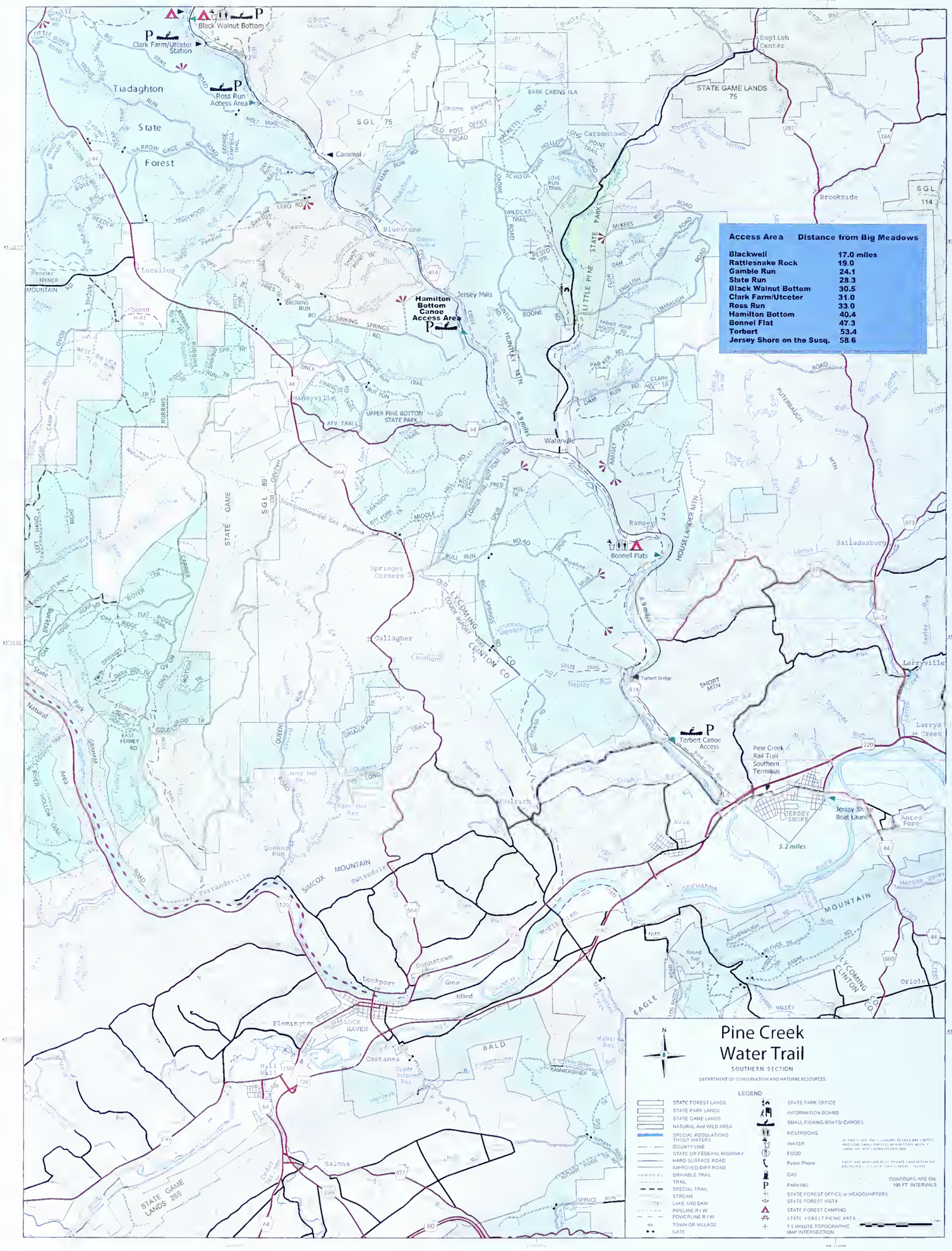
Most paddlers start their journey at Ansonia, navigate the canyon, and then take out 17 spectacular miles later in Blackwell. This section takes about six hours to complete, but it can be done much faster or slower depending on the water level, boat types, paddling speed, stopping to fish, etc. There are state forest and private camping facilities in the area where paddlers can spend the night along the creek and then paddle on to points downstream for one, two, three or more days, depending on the distance you want to travel and the amount of exploring, fishing or sightseeing you'd like to do. Contact the Tioga or Tiadaghton State forests for camping information.

In the past few years, "recreational" kayaks have become popular among river trippers. Still, plenty of traditionalists prefer an open canoe (or raft) for journeying with spouses, gear, etc. Sturdy paddles are a must (plus a spare), and secured waterproof gear bags prevent soaked or lost clothing and equipment. Coast Guard-approved life vests are mandatory for all occupants, and wetsuits should be worn in springtime and fall when the water is cold.

If there is anything negative to be said about the experience of floating Pine Creek, surely it's the slight hassle of shuttling vehicles. Several boat and equipment rental businesses operate in the region that offer shuttle services for those renting equipment or without the means of planting a shuttle vehicle downstream. A fun option is to put a bicycle in your canoe and then ride it back upstream on the adjacent Pine Creek Rail Trail to reach your automobile.

(article continued on page 17)


Pennsylvania
ANGLER & BOATER
www.fish.state.pa.us
PENNSYLVANIA FISH & BOAT COMMISSION
PINE CREEK WATER TRAIL
NORTHERN SECTION
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES
LEGEND
Tioga State Forest
Leonard Harrison State Park
Colton Point State Park
Pine Creek Gorge Natural Area
Tiadaghton
Blackwell
Robert McCullough Jr. Access Area
Rattlesnake Rock Access Area
Hoffman Campground
Gamble Run Access Area
Slate Run Village and Access Area
Black Walnut Bottom Access Area
Clark Farm/Utceter Station Access Area
Big Meadows Access Area
Asaph Picnic Area & Campground
Future Northern Terminus Wellsboro Junction
Algerine Wild Area
Wolf Run Wild Area
Algerine Swamp Nat Area
Reynolds Springs Natural Area
Cedar Run
Mount Tom
Round Top
Elephant Mtn.
Hedgehog Point
Huggler Hollow
Lick Run Hill
Button Hollow
Acid Factory Hollow
Babylon Run
Bloody Run
Germania Branch
Stony Fork
Knapp
Goat Ranch Hill
Olmsville
Draper
Antrim
Dexter
Russell Hill
Thumway Hill
Tioga District Office
Leetonia
Gleason Hill
Fahnestock Hill
Callahan Hill
Morris
Lorenton
Oregon Hill
The Horn
Bald Mt.
Kortz
Sliders Run
Big Spring Branch
Big Dam Hollow
Cedar Run
Fall Run
Long Run
Big Run
Pine Creek
West Branch
Fork
Sliders Road
Butternut Hollow Rd
Francis-Leetonia Rd
Fahnestock Road
Clay Mine Road
Cedar Run Road
Beulah Lamo Rd
Chest Nut Road
Spring Line Road
Gamble Run Road
Slate Run Road
Foster Hollow Rd
Pump Station Tower
Potter County
Tioga County
Lycoming Co.
Clinton County
8.5 miles
5.4 miles
4.2 miles
2.2 miles
2.0 miles
2.5 miles to Ross Run
SGL 208
SGL 313
SGL 268
SGL 75
State Game Lands 68
State Game Lands 75
Goodall Rd
Asaph Rd
Big Meadows Rd
Colton Point Rd
Thompson Hollow Rd
Mill Run Rd
Ridge Rd
Cedar Run Rd
Welch Ridge Trail
Pine Creek Rail Trail
Donut Hole Trail
Seven Dry Run Road
Little Boyer Road
Boyer Run Road
Rose Run Road
Stone Quarry Road
Gas Line Tr
Golden Eagle Trail
Algerine Trail
Huckleberry Trail
Bear Meadows Trail
Woodruff Trail
Deadman Hollow Trail
Wildcat Trail
Wildapple Bake Oven Trail
Turkey Path
Thompson Hollow Trail
Pine Creek Trail
Callahan Hill Trail
Vonolmes Trail
Bridge Trail
Hoffman Trail
Big Run Trail
Fall Run Trail
Long Run Trail
Cedar Run Trail
Beulah Lamo Trail
Algerine Trail
Gamble Run Trail
Slate Run Trail
Foster Hollow Trail
Pine Creek Gorge
Grand Canyon of Pa.
Chesapeake Rapids Use Caution
Tioga River
Pine Creek
Cedar Run
Big Run
Fall Run
Long Run
Slate Run
Ross Run
Wolf Run
Golden Eagle
Algerine Swamp
Reynolds Springs
Vonolmes
Bridge
Hoffman
Gamble Run
Slate Run
Foster Hollow
Pump Station Tower
Clark Farm/Utceter
Black Walnut Bottom
Wolf Run
Algerine
Cedar Run
Beulah Lamo
Rattlesnake Rock
Robert McCullough Jr.
Blackwell
Tioga State Forest
Pine Creek Gorge
Leonard Harrison
Colton Point
Tiadaghton
Big Meadows
Asaph
Future Northern Terminus
Wellsboro Junction


Access Area Distance from Big Meadows
Blackwell 17.0 miles
Rattlesnake Rock 19.0
Gamble Run 24.1
Slate Run 28.3
Black Walnut Bottom 30.5
Clark Farm/Utceter 31.0
Ross Run 33.0
Hamilton Bottom 40.4
Bonnel Flat 47.3
Torbert 53.4
Jersey Shore on the Susq. 58.6
Pine Creek Water Trail
SOUTHERN SECTION
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES
LEGEND
Tiadaghton State Forest
Black Walnut Bottom
Clark Farm/Utceter Station
Ross Run Access Area
Hamilton Bottom Canoe Access Area
Bonnell Flats
Torbert Canoe Access
Pine Creek Rail Trail Southern Terminus
Jersey Shore Boat Launch
Cammal
Jersey Mills
Waterville
Ramsey
Lookport
Flemington
Castanea
Salona
Jallagher
Springer Corners
Haneyville
Tucullus
Bluestone
Brookside
English Center
Carsontown
Larryville
Salladasburg
Antes Fort
Avis
Jersey Shore
STATE GAME LANDS 75
STATE GAME LANDS 265
SGL 75
SGL 89
SGL 114
UPPER PINE BOTTOM STATE PARK
6.9 miles
5.2 miles
SIMCOX MOUNTAIN
HUNTLEY MTN
HOUSELANDER MTN
SHORT MTN
LITTLE PINE STATE PARK
LYCOMING CLINTON CO.
STATE PARK LANDS
STATE GAME LANDS
NATURAL And WILD AREA
SPECIAL REGULATIONS TROUT WATERS
COUNTY LINE
STATE OR FEDERAL HIGHWAY
HARD SURFACE ROAD
IMPROVED DIRT ROAD
DRIVABLE TRAIL
TRAIL
SPECIAL TRAIL
STREAM
LAKE AND DAM
PIPELINE R/W
POWERLINE R/W
TOWN OR VILLAGE
GATE
STATE PARK OFFICE
INFORMATION BOARD
SMALL FISHING BOATS/ CANOES
RESTROOMS
WATER
FOOD
Pubic Phone
GAS
PARKING
STATE FOREST OFFICE or HEADQUARTERS
STATE FOREST VISTA
STATE FOREST CAMPING
STATE FOREST PICNIC AREA
7.5 MINUTE TOPOGRAPHIC MAP INTERSECTION
CONTOURS ARE ON 100 FT. INTERVALS

Fishing

Pine Creek supports a diverse fishery that includes excellent trout fishing in the upper stretches. The lower part of the creek (Waterville and downstream) affords an opportunity to target warmwater species. The Fish & Boat Commission manages Pine Creek as approved trout water along the water trail from Ansonia to Waterville. In fact, the Commission stocks trout starting at the Genesee Fork of Pine Creek and ending at Waterville, an amazing 56.7 miles of stocked stream. Pine Creek has more miles stocked with trout than any other stream in Pennsylvania.

Pine Creek also has two Delayed-Harvest sections where special regulations apply. The first section is from Ansonia (near Darling Run) to one mile downstream and ending near the confluence with Owassee Slide Hollow. A second Delayed-Harvest stretch is in Lycoming County from the mouth of Slate Run to Naval Run, a reach of about 1.2 miles.

Pine Creek's large size will challenge an angler's skills. Light- to medium-action spinning and baitcasting outfits are strongly suggested. Fly-fishing outfits of 5-weight or more and 8 feet or longer are safe bets when fishing what the "locals" call "Big Pine."

Although it holds large brown trout, Pine Creek provides more of a warmwater fishery below Waterville to the mouth near Jersey Shore. However, feisty smallmouth bass and walleyes can be caught from the canyon to the mouth. Pine Creek offers some excellent smallmouth bass fishing in the lower section. Other species in addition to trout and bass that are targeted less frequently by anglers are rock bass, suckers and carp, especially in the lower reaches.



Consult the current *Pennsylvania Fishing Summary* regarding Pine Creek. Use extreme caution when wading. Pine Creek is very swift, slick and unexpectedly deep in many places.

Note: Fishing information was compiled by members of the Jersey Shore Area High School Boating and Fly Fishing Club.

Flow conditions

Depending on the type of craft you are paddling (rafts are slow, kayaks are fast) as well as the strength and pace of the paddler, the mood of the creek, etc., people are able to move downstream at between 2 and more than 5 miles per hour. To rush the trip is to waste it, because the scenery will beg you to sit back and go with the flow.

Save the lounging for lazier water, however, because a few sections in the gorge approach Class III, which means that novice boaters need to stop, assess the situation and portage, if necessary.

Pine Creek's water levels usually begin to drop in June, but Mother Nature has the final say. Normally by mid-August, the tens of millions of trees in the forests of northcentral Pennsylvania are in stiff competition for a late-summer drink. Raindrops falling from hit-or-miss thunderstorms have little chance of passing through the gauntlet of thirsty roots and puckered soil. Consequently, the watersheds of the Susquehanna are able to contribute very little to the passions of paddlers. Heavy thunderstorms or tropical systems occasionally swell the creek enough to offer a few days of good late-summer or fall paddling.

By checking the USGS water level data for the gauge at Cedar Run (**http//pa.waterdata.usgs.gov**), boaters can view the creek's current water level. Readings between 2.5 and 3.5 feet are considered good, and below 2 means that you may scrape the bottom in some of the riffles. As you head south, the Pine takes water from Babb Creek, Cedar Run, Slate Run, Little Pine and many smaller streams, so scraping is less likely the farther downstream you venture. Read the water carefully.

Emergencies

In an emergency, dial 911. Cell phone service is limited, or nonexistent, in the Pine Creek Gorge.

Public telephones are located at Ansonia, Blackwell, Slate Run, Cammal, Waterville and Jersey Shore.

Contacts

- Tiadaghton State Forest, 423 E. Central Avenue, South Williamsport, PA 17702; (570) 327-3450; **www.dcnr.state.pa.us;** fd12@state.pa.us.
- Tioga State Forest, One Nessmuck Lane, Wellsboro, PA 16901; (570) 724-2868; **www.dcnr.state.pa.us**; fd16@state.pa.us.
- Lycoming County Visitor's Bureau, 210 William Street, Williamsport, PA 17701; (570) 327-7700; 1-800-358-9900; **www.vacationpa.com;** visitorinfo@williamsport.org.
- Tioga County Visitor's Bureau, Historic Jail Annex, 114 Main Street, Wellsboro, PA 16901; 1-888-TIOGA28; (570) 724-0635; **www.visittiogapa.com;** tiogapa@epix.net.



Howard Wagner, Musky Man

Beaver Countian Howard Wagner, 58, has been a musky angler for some 40 years, after a friend introduced him to this specialized kind of fishing in the Freeport area of the Allegheny River. The size and power of these fish lured him into the sport, and ever since, he's fished for them all over western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, New York and Canada. He's discovered a few good spots in those 40 years, and he's developed techniques for consistent success.

"Today, the Allegheny River is one of my favorite musky spots," Howard says. "Tamarack Lake is a great lake today for numbers of muskies, not the biggest ones, and Conneaut Lake is good. I still like some of the smaller lakes when I get a chance to fish them in the summer, like Lake LeBeouf and Edinboro Lake. I also like Lake Erie."



Musky expert Howard Wagner has specific ideas on musky tackle. He uses 80-pound braided polyester lines for both casting and trolling. "I like a longer rod for trolling, about 9 feet, 6 inches, and shorter rods for casting," says Howard. "I also use custom rods because they have more guides added for strength, and you can use blanks that are a little thicker than commercially available rods." When it comes to casting, I like a 6-foot rod for fishing jerkbaits and a 7-footer for working crankbaits."

Howard also likes a more specialized kind of musky fishing. "I've been doing a lot of kayak fishing for muskies in the smaller creeks like Cussewago Creek, which runs in at Meadville, French Creek and Conewango near Warren, and the Clarion from the mouth a few miles up, and even in the mouth of Red Vine Creek. I am thinking about trying Buffalo Creek and a couple of other ones because I am sure that muskies are spreading out from the main rivers into most of these creeks, and they will probably have some nice muskies."

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Howard uses level-wind reels with line counter features for trolling, which allow precise lure placement. "Anybody who's serious about trolling for muskies, or any other fish, knows exactly how deep their lures run with each amount of line out," Howard says.

Howard fishes year-round for muskies, but he prefers two seasons—May and June, and around November. "I like the end of May to about the middle of June if I'm just having a lot of fun or going after a lot of fish, not necessarily a really big musky," Howard says. At that time, Howard says, muskies are finished spawning and getting their appetites back, and they're still in shallow water and easy to find. Howard says he finds muskies then right in vegetation or at the edge of vegetation where the bottom drops into deeper water.

"If I'm after a big musky, I look for females that have stored fat for the winter from a summer of feeding well and eggs starting to develop. I've caught my heaviest fish in November."

Howard likes to fish for muskies mainly during two periods. "Two times seem to be the best," he says. "First, somewhere between 10 and 11 in the morning when the first wind starts to put a chop or a ripple on the water. That seems to trigger muskies to feed. Two things seem to happen then. If the day is bright, the breeze diffuses the light that comes down through the water, so I think they come out of their thick cover and start looking for food. The breeze also seems to oxygenate the water."

Howard also says that some of the biggest muskies seem to come out right at sundown, just as the sun gets behind the tops of the trees.

"Those really big ones seem to know when the boat motor pressure and the sound dies down after about 5 p.m. and people are going in for dinner and the lake quiets down. That's when you see those giants come out looking around. The sun's off the water then, too," Howard says.

Howard fishes from shore and from boats. "In the wintertime, I prefer shore fishing, but sometimes I use a boat to get to a certain spot on the shore, or a kayak. In the summer, I mostly prefer going to lakes.

Howard doesn't tempt muskies with bait. "I started with it, but the trouble with bait is that it seems like you have to wait for a musky to come to you and you're never sure if there is a musky around," he says. "With lures you can move around and cover a lot more ground."

"I use many hand-crafted lures made by individuals who own small bait companies," Howard says. "For trolling, I like a Wiley Lure, made by Dell Wiley; a Legend Lure, made by Brian Boyer; and a Warner Lure, made by Steve Warner. All are Pennsylvanians." Howard likes their quality and says they always run straight, a mark of quality workmanship. These lures are about 8 to 11 inches long.

"For casting, I like a Ferris Lure, made by Jim Ferris, and a Minteer Lure, made by Jerry Minteer, both of whom are Pennsylvanians," Howard says.

Howard likes trolling his lures at 5 to 8 mph and anywhere from 10 feet to 100 feet behind his boat. "It's not uncommon to catch muskies while you're trolling 5 to 7 mph and as close as 10 feet behind your boat," he says. Howard says that the shallower the water, the closer you want the lure, the deeper the water, the farther back you want it.

"I like a stop-and-go casting retrieve to make a lure appear to be struggling," Howard says.

Howard says he has no preference these days over lake fishing or river fishing because both lakes and rivers have big muskies. And he's definitely no stranger to big muskies. "I got a 55-inch musky trolling on Lake Erie about four years ago, and I was casting at a stream mouth nearby and caught a 54.5-inch musky during the winter."

Howard carries a net with him, "the biggest you can buy," and long-nose pliers to remove hooks, stressing safety considerations for a musky's daunting dental work.



photos courtesy of Howard Wagner

Howard Wagner fishes year-round for muskies, but he prefers two seasons—May and June, and around November. "I like a stop-and-go casting retrieve to make a lure appear to be struggling," Howard says.

REFLECTING ON THE WATER
Along the Juniata River Water Trail

by Ron Kuhn

illustrations by the author

The van backed down the ramp toward the river. Ellie and Ethan walked down to the water's edge to investigate, and Jack and his brother-in-law Uncle Ronnie unloaded the old aluminum canoe and two red kayaks. As Jack and Beth loaded the canoe with supplies for two days, the kids talked to several other children as they skipped stones across the water. Uncle Ronnie pointed out some good fishing spots on the water trail map along their route. Along the way they would camp on an island overnight before meeting Ronnie at the trip's end, at Muskrat Springs.

Uncle Ronnie drove the van up the ramp as Jack and the family donned their life jackets. Jack wasted no time starting the kids fishing. Jack had caught his first walleye on this river years before on a live crayfish. Bass and catfish populated the river along with some muskies.

The Juniata is the second-largest river feeding the Susquehanna, second only to the West Branch. Jack always enjoyed paddling through the fields and mountain ridges. He was a huge fan of Pennsylvania history. It always made him think of the native Americans and the many settlers that lived in the area years before. Today, the river flowed clear with a little bit of fog surfacing in the morning. Jack knew that whenever it rains upstream, the Juniata quickly becomes a coffee color with a tint of creamer. Ethan caught several bluegills on a small minnow lure. After changing to a crayfish plug, he caught a nice smallmouth bass.



Sandstone block columns, remnants of the days of covered bridges, stood in the middle of the river, reminding present-day travelers of the means of travel years before. Jack planned to camp on a large island downstream where he used to camp often with his Uncle Gene. The river hadn't changed much since Jack first followed its meandering path, mostly along farms and mountains. Every so often a school of minnows would break the surface, likely running from a smallmouth bass or a walleye.

As the kids fished, Jack and Beth paddled and enjoyed the warm breezes that came from the ridges. As time drew close to dinner, Jack was happy to see the island come into view. He alerted the kids to reel their lines in and get ready to set up camp, but Ethan balked at that idea. He wanted to keep fishing for walleyes. He had caught bass, rock bass and several bluegills, but no walleyes.

As soon as camp was set up, Jack began boiling water on his backpacking stove. Ethan grabbed his rod and began working his way around the edge of the island to try his luck again. After catching several small rock bass, Ethan decided to head back to camp to get something to eat.

As the kids ate their packets of chicken-flavored noodles and sandwiches, Jack told them about the massive hellgrammites that lurked under the river's rocks and how smallmouths and walleyes love them. Ethan wolfed down his meal and waded around the edge of the river, rolling rocks over to find some of the bait his dad had just described. Jack joined Ethan with a fish net and a small container while Beth and Ellie lounged on the riverbank watching a kingfisher dart through the forest canopy. After some time the guys found several hellgrammites and a few stone catties to use for bait.

With evening coming, Jack lit the propane lanterns and hung them where they could cast their light around camp.

The guys decided to use the hellgrammites to try catching a walleye after dark as they set up the folding seats from the canoe next to the river's edge. Ethan cast a large hellgrammite into the darkness and let it drift until he felt it stop.

"Dad! I think I have something," he said. Ethan started reeling in, but the line went slack. "It got away, dad." Jack knew the hellgrammite was finding the bottom and holding tight enough for the young fisherman to think he had something.

Ellie and Beth sat at the camp heating hot chocolate over the small hiking stove as a locomotive motored by. Jack showed Ethan how to pull his rod tip up when he thought the bait was getting close to the bottom so that it would bounce along instead of clinging to a rock.



After catching several small catfish, the guys decided to call it a night and get ready for bed. The girls were already asleep when Jack and Ethan got into their sleeping bags. Even though the pad under Jack's bed was rated highly for comfort, his back didn't agree. Within minutes, Ethan was asleep, but Jack lay on his back listening to the flowing water and what seemed like train after train as he positioned himself to find the most comfortable spot. Sometime in the early morning, Jack finally fell asleep.

Beth and the kids awoke early and had breakfast almost finished by the time Jack awoke. "How did you sleep?" Beth asked, even though she knew the answer by Jack's haggard appearance. Jack answered with a smirk and a nod.

A train made its way past as they packed the canoe with their gear. A fog lifted off the water as they pushed into the current. Ethan cast toward the bank several times with a crayfish until his line tightened and he began to reel. As soon as Jack realized Ethan had hooked a walleye, he paddled close to help land the fish. Ethan studied the strange-looking fish as his dad safely removed the hook with pliers. Jack explained how the fish's eyes were adapted to low light levels to help them see prey in dark or dimly lit conditions. Jack placed the 19-inch fish in the cooler.

As they paddled through a slow-water stretch, dragonflies buzzed around the water, resting on the end of Ethan's fishing rod several times. Jack and Beth took a lot of time to coast and enjoy the river and its surroundings as Ethan paddled ahead and back past them. After several hours the family paddled up to an older green john boat anchored in the middle of the river with the sideburn-clad fisherman who had dropped them off fishing.

"You guys have any luck?" Ronnie asked, and Beth held up Ethan's walleye. "Who hauled him in?" Ronnie asked as he looked at Ethan. The young fisherman pointed to himself as Ronnie congratulated him. "I caught several nice bronzebacks, but I'll have to wait until June 16 to keep 'em."

Jack told Ethan how Ronnie is quite the musky fisherman and that sometime they might go with him to learn how to catch these monsters. Ronnie pulled the john boat into shallow water and helped Ethan in to fish with him for another hour or so until the rest of the family paddled their way downstream to Muskrat Springs where the van awaited them.

After Jack and Beth loaded the canoe and kayaks onto the van and stowed the gear, they took Ellie knee-deep into the clear water to explore the river bottom while they waited for Ronnie to motor downstream with Ethan. After they loaded the john boat onto the trailer, everyone headed back to Ronnie's house for an early dinner and some fishing stories.

Ethan looked at photo albums of muskies and the deer that the old sportsman had harvested over the years. As they sat at the kitchen table, everyone ate Ethan's walleye and some panfish Ronnie had caught. Jack and Ronnie set up a date for mid-summer to try for muskies and to test the new soft-rubber hellgrammite lures that Jack hoped to produce from those he and Ethan collected during this trip. On the way home, Jack slept, reclined in the passenger seat with his favorite fishing hat over his face. While Beth drove, she knew she had decided on the perfect Father's Day gift—a better bed cushion.

Partnerships



by Spring Gearhart
photos by the author

Raising trout using water from acid mine drainage—impossible? Not at the Toby Creek Watershed Association Cooperative Nursery in Brockway. This trout nursery, built using the unique idea of Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commissioner William Sabatose and Analytical Services owner and CEO, uses out-of-the-box thinking as well as 21st century technology to accomplish what others may view as the impossible.

Almost 2 years as a nursery

Going into its second year of operation, the nursery is operated by the Toby Creek Watershed Association. The association is in its 41st year of operation and was founded by Sabatose. It is one of the oldest watershed associations in the state, and its members are very concerned with the water quality of the Clarion River and Toby Creek. With a history of acid mine drainage pollution, these two waterways have greatly benefited from the clean-up efforts of the association.

There are only two watershed associations, including Toby Creek, with nurseries enrolled in the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's Cooperative Nursery Program.

Toby Creek Watershed Association's nursery took one year to build. The cost included $1.7 million from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (Growing Greener) and the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Surface Mining for the construction of the building, pollution clarification equipment, and pumps. The nursery received $100,000 from the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission for construction related to raising fish.

At a Glance

Nursery's Name:
Toby Creek Watershed Association Cooperative Nursery

Operated by: Toby Creek Watershed Association

Established: 2005

Years in Operation: almost 2

Active Nursery Operation Membership: 1

Type of Fish Raised: Brook trout, rainbow trout, brown trout, and golden rainbow trout

Quantity Stocked: 10,000



Commissioner Sabatose feeds trout. Trout are hand-fed three times a day. Each tank currently holds 5,000 trout.

Operation

So how does Sabatose's theory of using acid mine drainage water from a polluted stream work to raise healthy trout of all species?

Acid mine discharge water passes beneath a road and goes to a water treatment station where the water is cleaned to drinking water standards. At the treatment station, potassium permanganate ($KMnO_4$) is added to the water and is aerated to remove the iron. The water turns red. A liquid polymer is added that separates the iron from the water. In a clarifying vat, the iron is collected at the bottom while the clean water is siphoned off the top. The iron (iron hydroxide) goes to a holding tank and is then taken into a filter press and formed into a solid on a conveyer belt. The clean water is channeled to two circular tanks where the trout are raised.

"We're cleaning up the environment and getting a beneficial use out of it by raising fish. The trout grow fast because of the ideal water temperature of 50 degrees year-round. There is a very low mortality rate because the entire nursery is indoors [predators can't get at it] and water quality is not compromised [by outside factors].

Toby Creek Watershed Association Cooperative Nursery



On the left, drinkable water. On the right, acid mine discharge water.

We lost only four fish this year," says Sabatose.

The cooperative nursery is presently raising 10,000 trout each year, but it has the ability to raise 20,000 trout each year. Additional trout could be raised for the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission or, if purchased, for a restaurant with profits going back into operating expenses or stream clean-up. This type of nursery could also be adapted for other fish species, not just trout.

Trout are received in August. Each tank currently holds 5,000 trout. Trout are hand-fed three times a day.

Toby Creek Watershed Association's trout nursery is operated by one full-time operations manager. Due to the technical aspects of this nursery, this is a paid position by the Toby Creek Watershed Association. There is also a back-up operator. And if needed, Sabatose and another watershed chemist are on hand.

Their total operational cost for two years is $85,000.

The nursery uses sensors to monitor power outages, changes in oxygen levels, and changes in water temperatures. An automated telephone system dials a list of numbers to notify personnel of such emergencies.

What happens to the raw material from the iron removal (iron hydroxide) and the fish waste? Currently the iron hydroxide is captured and sent to a land fill. However, in the future as the operation grows, the waste may be sold for use in pottery, paint and other similar chemicals.

The fish waste is collected from the bottom of the tanks using an automatic waste clean-out system. The waste then goes to a pond, into a filtering wetland area and cleaner into a creek. At a larger facility, the waste could be sold for fertilizer.

"We need to work smarter," says Sabatose. By using all materials to their fullest potential, the nursery is doing just that.

Stocking

During the first year of operation, the association raised all rainbow trout. This year, Toby Creek Watershed Association is raising 9,200 brook trout, 500 rainbow trout, 200 brown trout and 100 golden rainbow trout.

Trout are stocked by the Brockway Sportsmen's Club of Brockway and the Island Run Sportsmen's Club of Ridgway. The following waterways are stocked: Little Toby Creek (majority), Whetstone Run (a branch of Little Toby Creek), Clarion River, Rattlesnake Creek, Rattlesnake Run, Mead Run, Boggy Run, many children's derbies (12 and under), and a children's only area (12 and under) in Brockway (Little Toby Creek).

Support, funding

Toby Creek receives support and funding from many agencies. Some of these agencies include the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, and the Pennsylvania Game Commission as well as local companies and the community.

Activities

Each year the nursery holds an open house to educate the public. Last year, 500 people attended this event.

This year's event was also a success with 425 people in attendance for the



The nursery uses sensors to monitor power outages, changes in oxygen levels, and changes in water temperatures. An automated telephone system dials a list of numbers to notify personnel of such emergencies.



The iron (iron hydroxide) is taken into a filter press and formed into a solid.

dedication to L. Eugene Smith (former Jefferson County legislator). L. Eugene Smith was instrumental in helping convince the public of the influence of acid mine drainage on waterways and the environment in the 1960s, when this idea was not popular.

Recognition

Recently, the association applied for the Governor's Excellence Award of Technology.

In September 2006, the Toby Creek Watershed's nursery also won first place with 80 percent of all votes in the Cutting Edge/Initiative Technology category for a display at the 4th Annual Ohio River Watershed Celebration in Pittsburgh.

Future

"We're the only fish nursery of this kind in the United States. This technology has a future and will be used for flagship hatcheries," says Sabatose.

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission plans to use some of the same technology in a trout expansion project at the Reynoldsdale State Fish Hatchery in New Paris, Bedford County.

The Reynoldsdale project will include the same type of oxygen injection system, tanks and automatic waste clean-out system at the bottom or side of each tank. The Commission expects a design shortly. At that time, the project will go out for contractor bid.

For more information on the Toby Creek Watershed Association or the trout nursery, contact William Sabatose at 814-265-8749 (Analytical Services). To make donations for the association's projects, mail correspondence to the Toby Creek Watershed Association, P.O. Box 237, Brockway, PA 15824.

PFBC Spotlight

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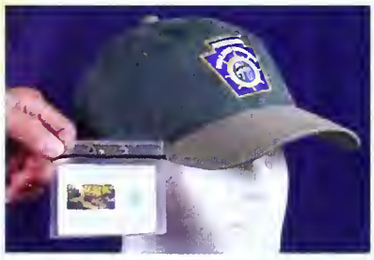
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Hat #2: Canvas Hat- a canvas-style hat available in green with gray brim, blue, or moss. $14.00

Hat #3: Tan and Green Hat- a heavy-duty denim hat. $14.00





You can order these great hats online in The Outdoor Shop at: www.fish.state.pa.us, or send payment total (w/ $3.00 shipping and handling charge) to: PA Fish & Boat Commission, Educational Media Services, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000. Use check or money order payable to: PA Fish & Boat Commission. Remember, hats are tax-exempt.

GROWING UP RIVALS

by Jennifer Bilott

I was an only child for my first 10 years. Then along came my little brother. My father took him fishing with us, and I thought he was an annoyance. As he grew, he competed with me in everything, especially in fishing. When he would catch a bigger fish than I caught, I could never live it down until I did one better. I succumbed to the same torture if he caught more fish than I caught. This was sibling rivalry at its best. I know that throughout the years we wore on my dad's nerves. He still reminisces about those days and in jest suggests how lucky we are to be alive today.

The wonderful part about having a sibling is how you mature together. As we grew older, the competition lessened and we have become support for each other. When he makes a wonderful catch, it's as if I caught the fish myself. And I can see the excitement in his eyes when I am supportive and approving of his success. My parents are proud at what we have become—friends.



photo-courtesy of the author

After a lengthy battle, we finally managed to lay our eyes on the trout, and it was beautiful.

This past spring my brother caught an enormous brown trout while fishing for steelhead in Erie. The day began at 3 a.m. with the long drive to Erie from Pittsburgh. When we arrived at Elk Creek, we were greeted with slightly stained water that would soon turn into near-perfect dark-green conditions that every serious steelheader dreams of.

Fly equipment was our tackle choice. Two of the people in our group had little experience fly-fishing and no experience attempting to land one of these fantastic fighters on such tackle. The preferred fly of the day was a Sucker Spawn. Most would be fished with a beadhead under a float just high enough to keep them off the bottom. After showing our rookie steelhead companions how to fish two flies in tandem, it was time to begin what we had traveled for.

Because of the murky water conditions, my brother decided to start with two dark-colored Sucker Spawn. The top fly was a moss-colored Sucker Spawn and the bottom fly was a dark-blue one with a beadhead. On the third cast, my brother said, "fish on" as he landed a nice male chromer. He managed to land four or five more during the next few hours, but we spent most of this time helping our rookie friends with tandem rigs and casting lessons.

I was amazed by my brother's patience. It seemed that his mission was not for himself, but instead to get our buddies their first fish on a fly rod. After a few failed attempts and some lessons learned about "bowing to the fish," a technique of dropping the fly rod tip as these brutes go airborne, each was rewarded with his first fly-rod chromer.

Now we were back to trying to land a few fish ourselves before enjoying a well-deserved lunch. Afterward, my brother began to fish again. On one specific cast about mid-drift, his float slowly went under, but not with the intensity the fresh fish were generally showing. When he set the hook, he felt the true size of the fish. One of our rookie companions said, "Wow! That must be a whopper steely!"

Having spent too much time on the local streams and not enough time attending class in the five years my brother spent at a local Erie university, he knew better. This fish was not our intended quarry—it was his crafty cousin with a totally different fighting style—a brown trout.

This fish's style is not to produce the leaping acrobatics and hard, fast runs of a fresh steelhead. This big brown sank to the deepest part of the hole and attempted to tire my brother. After a lengthy battle, we finally managed to lay our eyes on the trout, and it was beautiful.

Getting it to the net was our last challenge. After a bit of a struggle, we accomplished the final mission of the day. With a measurement of 27.5 inches and 13 pounds, we decided that the fish was a trophy brown worthy of gracing my brother's living room wall in remembrance of one fantastic fishing trip. As his big sister, I could not have been prouder.

The Green Drake

by Charles R. Meck

photos by the author



For more than 40 years I have chased the Green Drake hatch from stream to stream across the Commonwealth. The one thing that continues to amaze me after those four decades of fishing this spectacular, giant hatch is the wide variety of patterns that anglers use.

Why such a variance in the patterns used for this monster of mayflies? First, the number of fly-tiers has increased dramatically in the past couple of decades. Second, many anglers have experienced success on their own Green Drake patterns. But the more heavily fished a stream becomes during this hatch, the more selective the trout become.

On some occasions trout seem to take any large, fairly light pattern they see. But in most instances, when the Green Drake appears, so do other hatches like the Sulphur, Slate Drake, Brown Drake and March Brown. And that's the problem: While we insist on fishing a Green Drake pattern, some trout consistently feed on smaller flies like the Sulphur. I can't count the number of times I've been skunked during a Green Drake hatch when I've switched to a Sulphur dry fly and caught trout.

The two largest trout I ever caught during the drake hatch were taken on dry flies intentionally dragged under the surface a few inches.

The Green Drake

Hook: 2X long dry fly hook in sizes 8 to 10
Thread: Cream 6/0
Tail: moose mane fibers
Body: poly, dubbed and ribbed with the cream tying thread
Wing: Dark-green calf tail fibers
Hackle: One dark-brown and one cream hackle



1. *Tie in some calf tail fibers not quite a third of the way back from the eye. Don't crowd the eye. Make about 10 wraps with the tying thread in front of the wing to make it stand upright, and then with the tying thread divide the wing in two with a series of figure-eight wraps.*



2. *Take about a half-dozen moose mane fibers for the tail and tie them in at the bend. Let the fibers extend past the bend slightly less than the shank length. Cut off the butts.*



3. *Tie in a piece of the cream tying thread at the bend. Then dub some fine poly onto your waxed tying thread.*



4. *Wind the cream poly up to the wing and then rib the body about five times with the cream tying thread you left behind at the bend. Tie off the body and the ribbing just behind the wing.*



5. *Tie in the two hackles just behind the wing and cut off the butts. Make certain the dull side of the hackle faces forward and wind the two, first behind the wing and then in front of it. I wind more of the brown hackle in the front. Cut off the hackle tips.*



6. *Finish the head, whip finish and apply head cement.*

Fishing the Green Drake Hatch

by Carl Haensel

Fishing a mayfly hatch like the Green Drake can be an exciting challenge. Large trout slurp down mayflies that look like small sailboats in the twilight on a limestone trout stream. You cast your fly upstream of a large rise. The fly slowly drifts downstream, and it's suddenly engulfed in a large splash—or maybe not. More than one angler has cast to those rising fish over and over again without a hookup. Fooling finicky trout during the Green Drake hatch takes a variety of approaches to be consistently successful. What follows are some tips to make it easier.



Photo-Cindy Haensel

Likely the most famous location in Pennsylvania offering the Green Drake hatch is Penns Creek in Centre County. Remember to start your fishing day before the sun gets low in the sky. Mayfly nymphs can be active before the hatch gets going. The nymph fishing can be great, and the fish can be less selective.

Presentation

Anglers should remember that presenting the fly is more than half the battle. You may not need to change your fly if the fish refuse it—just present it differently. A fully sunken fly, or a fly that sits low or wet in the film, as opposed to one that's fully on top, offers a vastly different silhouette to the trout. Avoid showing the fish your line, leader or tippet before it sees the fly. Try presenting to the trout from an upstream angle so that your fly drifts downstream ahead of anything else. Keep in mind that trout can be especially picky about drag on a dry fly in a hatch. Mend your line to reduce drag when the fly is in the fish's feeding zone.

The Mayfly

Many mayflies hatch at a specific time of year. The Green Drake, *Ephemera guttulata*, is no different. It shows up at the end of May and in early June. Emergence times vary from stream to stream and location to location in Pennsylvania. Anglers should also note that not all trout streams harbor all mayfly species. Green Drakes tend to have strong emergences in mid-sized to large trout streams that exhibit a limestone influence. This quality, however, does not say that you will find the Green Drake in all limestone streams, and certainly there are many freestone streams that host the hatch. They are a common burrowing mayfly, and their appropriate habitat is the silt or silt-sand bottom of a stream or river.—*CH.*

Fly selection

Even though you should believe in the fly that you're using, carry a variety of flies so you have a number of options. In addition to at least one Green Drake dry fly, anglers should carry a "coffin fly" pattern to imitate the spinner life stage of the mayfly. This is very useful depending on how late into the evening you choose to fish. Large fish have been taken on coffin fly patterns well after dusk. Emerger patterns can also be useful at the beginning of a hatch before the adult mayflies become the favored target of the fish.

Sometimes one of the biggest challenges can actually be getting the fish to take the Green Drake itself. Many other mayflies commonly hatch at the same time as the Green Drake. If the fishing is just not going your way fishing the big flies, go small. Bring other, smaller mayflies besides the Green Drake, and make sure to carry a variety of lighter colored Sulphur or Pale Evening Dun patterns. Pick a specific fish to target, and watch the way it is rising and what it is eating, and fish to it. Catch that fish, and switch to another.

Avoid competition

The Green Drake is one of Pennsylvania's signature hatches. This means that on big-name streams like Penns Creek in Centre County, you won't be alone, and neither will the fish. If the fish seem too finicky for you, try another stream with fewer anglers. On popular streams, a 10- or 20-minute walk upstream or downstream may just get you to a nice spot without a lot of other anglers.

2006 Deputy Waterways Conservation Officers of the Year

Deputy waterways conservation officers (DWCOs) work with WCOs performing mainly specialized law enforcement duties in protecting, conserving and enhancing our water resources. Their work also includes watercraft safety law enforcement. Deputies work long hours, often on weekends and holidays. Even though they receive a small allowance for some expenses, they are otherwise not compensated.

Any officer may nominate a deputy for this recognition. Regional committees of personnel in the Commission bureaus of Law Enforcement and Fisheries review the nominations and choose the winners. DWCOs receive plaques for these awards. The awards carry the distinction of the recipients knowing that they were selected by their peers.



photo-Assistant Regional Supervisor Thomas Tarkowski

Deputy Waterways Conservation Officer Mark Kasiorek (left) is the Northwest Region's Deputy of the Year. Pictured with DWCO Kasiorek is Northwest Region Manager Bob Nestor.



photo-Assistant Regional Supervisor Larry Bundy

DWCO Ross D. Piazza (right) is the Northeast Region's Deputy of the Year. Pictured with DWCO Piazza is Northeast Region Manager Sally Corl.



photo-WCO David Decker

DWCO David M. Mull (left) is the Northcentral Region's Deputy of the Year. Pictured with DWCO Mull is Northcentral Region Manager Brian Burger.



photo-Carl Haensel

DWCO John Hechler (center) is the Southeast Region's Deputy of the Year. Pictured with DWCO Hechler are Southeast Region Manager Ray Bednarchik (left) and WCO Chad Woleslagle.



photo-Assistant Regional Supervisor Tom Burrell

DWCO Christopher Skipper (left) is the Southcentral Region's Deputy of the Year. Pictured with DWCO Skipper is Southcentral Region Manager Don Lauver.



photo-WCO Larry Furlong

DWCO John Toki (center) is the Southwest Region's Deputy of the Year. Pictured with DWCO Toki are Commissioner Don Anderson (right) and Southwest Region manager Emil Svetahor.

Years of Service Recognition

During the regions' annual awards presentations, the Commission recognized the following DWCOs for length of service.

Northwest Region
5 years: Shawn C. Hedglin
10 years: Jay E. Hewitt, Michael J. Reed
15 years: C. Robert McDowell
20 years: Robert H. Johnston Jr.

Northcentral Region
10 years: James F. Hillman
15 years: Jeffrey H. Colwell
25 years: Terry F. Bowersox
30 years: Randall S. Gatewood

Northeast Region
10 years: Christopher O. Hughes, Howard J. Morana
20 years: Anthony J. Winters
35 years: David F. Dembowski

Southeast Region
5 years: James R. Dickey, Peter M.H. Thomas
10 years: William H. Edwards, Wilson A. Saunders
20 years: C. Stephen Mobley, David H. Ziegler
25 years: John J. Bondura

Southcentral Region
25 years: Robert C. Houser Jr.
40 years: Stanley I. Rhoads Sr.
(special longevity recognition)

Southwest Region
10 years: Daniel M. D'Ottavio, David E. Thomas, Brian L. Tuccarello
25 years: Joseph W. Ow
30 years: Michael D. Symbala, Amil A. Zuzik

Becoming a DWCO

DWCOs from a variety of backgrounds work with the Commission's Bureau of Law Enforcement for many different reasons. All DWCOs share a common commitment to saving lives on our waterways and to protecting, conserving and enhancing Pennsylvania's aquatic resources and environment for future generations. Many DWCOs use their training and experience to move on to other law enforcement occupations.

Anyone interested in learning more about DWCO positions should contact his or her nearest Commission regional headquarters. These headquarters are listed on the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us, and on page 42 of the *2007 Pennsylvania Fishing Summary.*

If you are interested in becoming a fulltime waterways conservation officer, contact the Fish & Boat Commission at 717-705-7861, www.fish.state.pa.us; or contact the State Civil Service Commission at 717-783-3058, www.scsc.state.pa.us.



WCO Diary

by WCO Lewis Sweigart

Fishing for Catfish in the Lower Delaware River



photo-Mike Bleech

Catfish are lured to your bait by its scent. The trick to making a strong-scented lure work like chicken livers is how you present it.

It is always fun getting ready to go fishing. You start getting your fishing gear and your tackle together. You pack your cooler with plenty to eat and you begin to plan where you are going. You call your friends to see who wants to go with you. You pin your fishing license onto the hat you are going to wear. Now the question is, What bait am I going to use and where am I going to go fishing? Since the lower Delaware River is your choice, and it's often my choice when I'm out for a day of fishing, there are several different kinds of baits that can be useful, especially in the river's tidal portions.

In tidal waters of the Delaware River it's a good idea to use some durable bait. Since the river is flowing both normally downstream because of the current and then sometimes upstream as the tide comes in, the bait must be able to withstand some hard currents. You'll have the best luck with a few different kinds of baits such as worms, blood worms or synthetic blood worms, crayfish, shrimp, squid, minnows, American eels when used as baitfish, dough balls made from special mixtures, or chicken liver. Since catfish are bottom-dwellers and they are lured to your bait by its scent, the trick to making a strong-scented lure work like chicken livers is how you present it. Many people who fish for catfish know that chicken livers are a favorite of catfish and that they put off a strong scent in the water, especially if you have left them outside for a day or two. However, livers are not very durable. Anyone who has ever used them finds they pretty much tear apart easily in your hands. To prevent their shredding, use some material to bag the livers, like cheese cloth, synthetic skins or netting material like nylon hosiery. Just cut the livers into small portions and pack the chicken livers into the packing material ahead of time. Make little bags that you can put your hook through and maybe put a small piece at the bottom of the hook below the bag on the hook. If you pre-bag them and then let them sit in the sun for a day and become rancid, none of your friends may want to come with you, but the catfish will love you.

If you choose other baits, make sure to fasten the bait securely to the hook. The river itself can be very muddy and slack or very rocky and turbulent. Whichever bait comes to mind as your favorite type, make sure it will work in the area you have chosen. If you are not sure where to go, consult the Fish & Boat Commission's Fishing & Boating Map, or visit the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us.

Delaware River Catfish Resources

Check the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us, for a variety of resources on fishing and boating the Delaware River. On the web site's main page, enter "Delaware River" into the search area. Be sure first to check the *Pennsylvania Fishing Summary's* laws and regulations for the Delaware River and estuary.

The Fish & Boat Commission's web site also includes pages dedicated to channel catfish angling, management, stocking, regulations and fishing locations. To view, print or download a wealth of information on channel catfish, enter this address into your browser: http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/catfish.htm.

Marsh Creek State Park

by Carl Haensel



photo-Carl Haensel

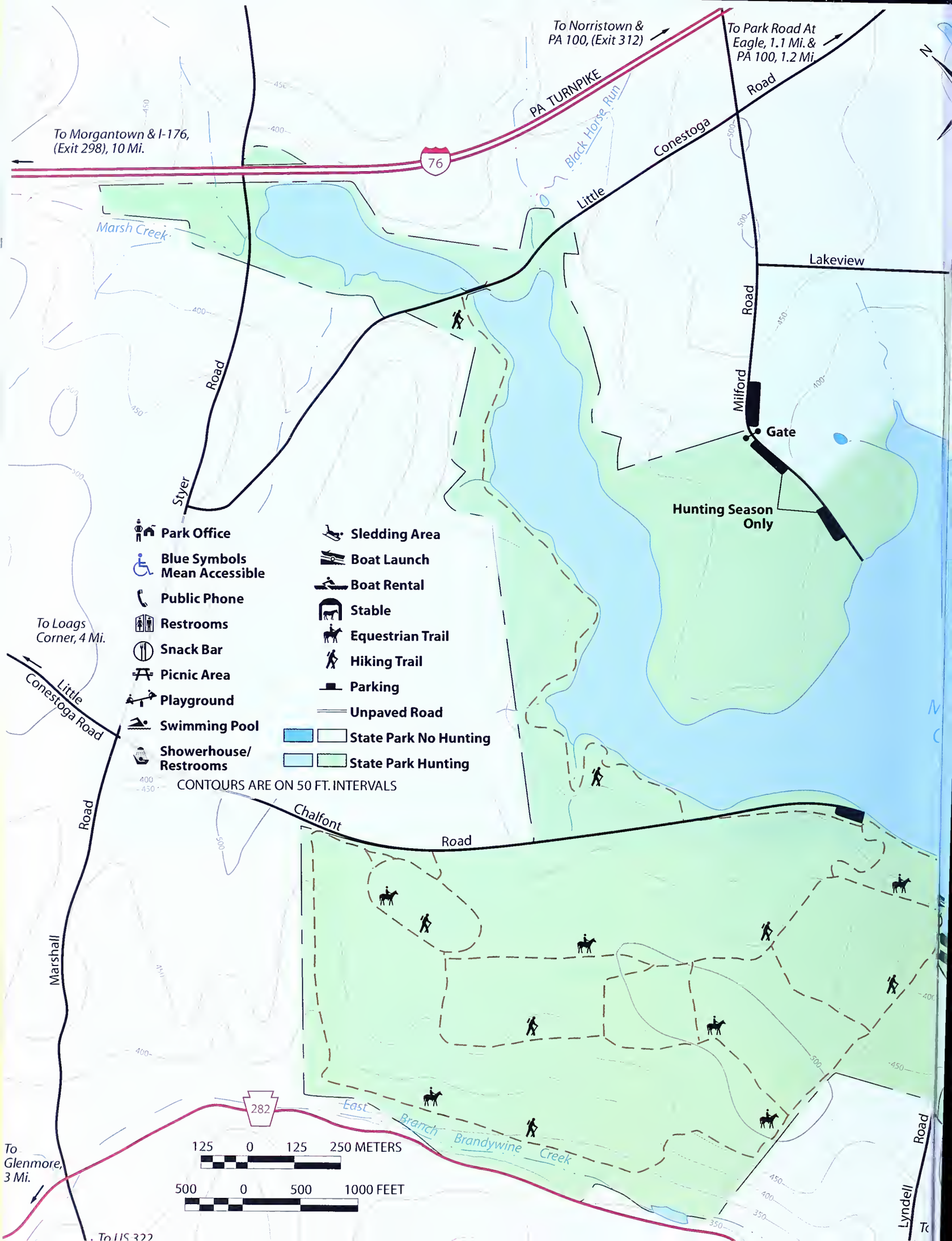
Families looking for a great place to fish and boat in southeast Pennsylvania are in luck when they visit Marsh Creek State Park. Located in the rolling hills of northcentral Chester County, this 1,705-acre park contains the 535-acre Marsh Creek Lake, which is great for fishing, paddling and sailing. The park is about 2 miles west of the village of Eagle on PA Route 100. Marsh Creek Lake was developed to help manage the water resources in the Brandywine Creek Watershed, which drains 330 square miles, most of which are in Chester County. Frequent flooding, water shortages and lack of recreational opportunities for nearby population centers were cited as problems in the watershed that prompted the lake's construction.

Fishing

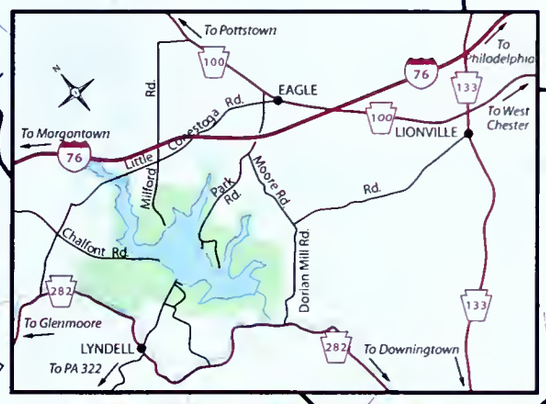
Anglers visit Marsh Creek for many reasons. The lake produces excellent fishing for many warmwater species. Some anglers target the lake's largemouth bass, others go for the panfish, and still others pursue muskellunge. The Marsh Creek Bass Club makes this lake its home, which is a testament to the lake's productivity as a largemouth bass lake. The club has partnered with the Commission to enhance the lake's fish habitat. They conduct tournaments each season on the lake that target largemouth bass, some of which are open to the public.

While the bass do receive a good amount of fishing pressure and can be finicky at times, look to this lake to consistently produce some nice bass. The lake is designated a Big Bass lake and specific regulations apply. Check the *Pennsylvania Fishing Summary*. A variety of locations around the lake consistently produce quality fish, and anglers need to be flexible and cover a bit of water to learn the best spots.

(article continued on page 34)


To Norristown & PA 100, (Exit 312)
To Park Road At Eagle, 1.1 Mi. & PA 100, 1.2 Mi.
PA TURNPIKE
76
To Morgantown & I-176, (Exit 298), 10 Mi.
Black Horse Run
Conestoga Road
Little
Marsh Creek
Styer Road
Lakeview Road
Milford Road
Gate
Hunting Season Only
Park Office
Blue Symbols Mean Accessible
Public Phone
Restrooms
Snack Bar
Picnic Area
Playground
Swimming Pool
Showerhouse/ Restrooms
Sledding Area
Boat Launch
Boat Rental
Stable
Equestrian Trail
Hiking Trail
Parking
Unpaved Road
State Park No Hunting
State Park Hunting
CONTOURS ARE ON 50 FT. INTERVALS
To Loags Corner, 4 Mi.
Little Conestoga Road
Chalfont Road
Marshall Road
282
East Branch Brandywine Creek
To Glenmore, 3 Mi.
125 0 125 250 METERS
500 0 500 1000 FEET
Lyndell Road
To US 322

MARSH CREEK STATE PARK



Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER

www.fish.state.pa.us

To Little Conestoga Road at Eagle, 0.6 Mi. & PA 100, 0.7 Mi.

To PA 100, 1.6 Mi.

Moore Road

Park Road

Jerry Run

Twp Line Road

To Lionville 2.5 Mi

Dorlan Mill Road

Mooring

EAST LAUNCH

Mooring

WEST LAUNCH

Mooring

Dam

Gate

Marsh Creek

East Branch Brandywine Creek

282

To Downingtown, 2.5 Mi.

North Reeds Road

To PA 282

Map courtesy of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Remember to charge your trolling motor batteries and maybe even bring a spare if you're planning to cover a lot of water on this lake, since the lake does not allow use of gasoline-powered motors.

Panfish anglers guard their secrets, and more than one crappie angler likes to think of this lake as his or her secret spot. Good numbers of nice sized-crappies can be caught at Marsh Creek, if you just find the right place. Anglers in springtime should fish the lake's upper, shallower end and look for submerged brush. If one spot doesn't produce fish for you, keep moving until you find the one that does. Anglers also regularly report catching nice-sized bluegills and some big yellow perch from the lake. Ice fishing can be productive for panfish if there is enough safe ice. Perch are a common quarry for hard-water anglers here.

Anglers looking to tangle with Pennsylvania's toothiest critter should make Marsh Creek Lake one of their top destinations. Fishing for tiger muskellunge has been hot in recent years, and the local chapter of Muskies, Inc., plans to make it even better by partnering with the Commission to stock additional muskellunge. Last season the club released 500 purebred muskellunge into Marsh Creek Lake, and it plans to continue augmenting the lake's Commission stockings.

While Marsh Creek has plenty of muskellunge in the water, they won't necessarily always jump in the boat for you. As with any musky fishing trip, be prepared to cover a lot of water and do a lot of casting.

Beginning in 2007 Marsh Creek Lake will be stocked annually with tiger muskellunge by the Commission, which should result in more tiger muskellunge stocked on a reliable basis.

Shore fishing

Shore fishing opportunities are excellent for panfish in many areas.



photo-Art Michaels

Anglers regularly report catching nice-sized bluegills and some big yellow perch. Above, Commission biologists survey some of Marsh Creek Lake's bounty, including many yellow perch like the one shown.

There are ample opportunities to fish near both the east and west boat launches for families that would like to picnic as well as fish. Good locations to target panfish can be found along Chalfont Road and near the Little Conestoga Road Bridge. Watch these areas in the early spring for angler activity. Early warm weather can bring some of the best shore fishing of the season to these spots. For the more adventurous shore angler, use the trail that runs along the lake's west shore between these two locations to reach some submerged brush locations for crappies and bluegills.

Boating

Boaters are restricted to electric motors only at this park, which makes it a beautiful sailing and paddling destination. The lake has two boat launch areas and 220 seasonal mooring slips. The lake is especially popular with sailboaters and sailboarders. Park-approved sailboat races draw spectators who enjoy the water activity from the lakeshore. Paddlers should take the time to get away from the lake's launches on its east side and explore the many coves, nooks and crannies.

Abundant wildlife-viewing opportunities can be found here for the willing paddler. A boat rental concession located at the East Launch offers rowboats, canoes and sailboats throughout the summer and, weather permitting, on weekends during the spring and autumn. Call 610-458-5040 for information regarding these opportunities.

Carl Haensel is the Fish & Boat Commission's Southeast Region aquatic resources program specialist.

More Information

Visit the official park web site for additional information on current regulations, maps and park information: www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/marshcreek.aspx.

Looking to stay in the area? There is no overnight camping at Marsh Creek State Park. Within one mile of the park is a privately owned campground on PA Route 282. French Creek State Park is 20 miles to the north and has year-round camping. Contact the Marsh Creek State Park office at 610-458-5119 with questions.—*CH.*

Pennsylvania River Sojourns

by Judy Jordan
Executive Director, PA Organization for Watersheds & Rivers



photos courtesy of POWR

Pennsylvania River Sojourns

The picture comes easily to mind: A pastoral woodland adorned by an effervescent stream that beckons you to its flowing waters for a peaceful float on a warm summer afternoon. You'd like to join those paddlers you've seen in the brightly colored kayaks and canoes bobbing down the creek, but it's too troublesome to borrow your brother's heavy aluminum canoe and you don't have a roof rack. You're not sure where you would enter and exit the creek, or whether it would be safe, and who's going to watch the kids?

Now you can take them along, relax and enjoy yourself. The answer is called the Pennsylvania River Sojourns. This is a collection of trips organized by local paddlers on streams near you. Each sojourn features canoes or kayaks for rent, shuttles to deliver your boats and gear, bathroom stops, meals and camaraderie with others who share your enjoyment of the outdoors. Best of all, there are plenty of kids to keep yours company and there are even educational programs to teach students, young and old, about a river's ecosystems and history.

The sojourns are coordinated by the Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds & Rivers (POWR), a nonprofit corporation that promotes watershed stewardship.

"If you live close enough to Pennsylvania, you can take advantage of this unique program, which is unparalleled in any other state," says John Coutts, POWR's sojourn coordinator. "In 2006, 15 sojourns covered 701 miles of Pennsylvania waterways, from the Ohio River to the Delaware and some of the most gorgeous rivers in between."

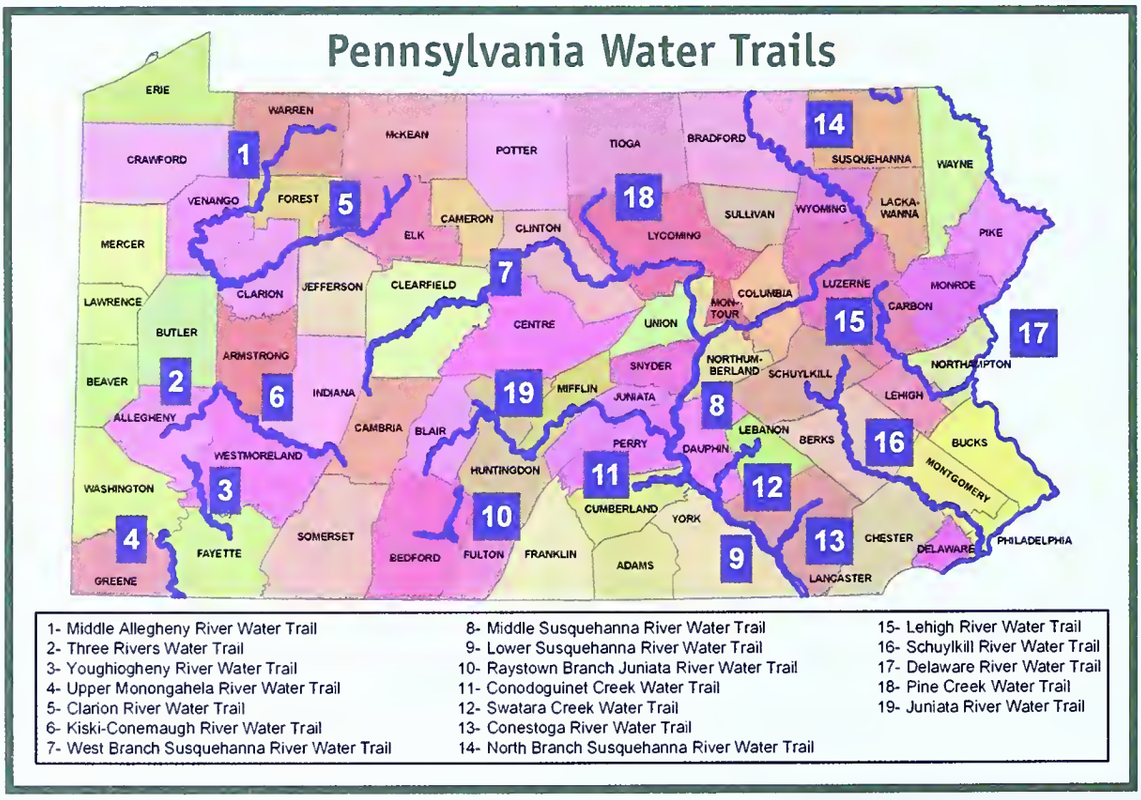
POWR's Angie McCracken agrees. She was so taken with her first sojourn on the Clarion River that she went out and bought a kayak. She daydreams about owning one of the quaint cabins that speckle the streambanks near Cooksburg.

Coutts, who has been coordinating the program since October 2006, says that he often entertains questions about the sojourns. "People wonder if they're expensive, but most sojourns have daily fees of around $50 max." The reason the sojourns are so affordable is that they are subsidized by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). Cindy Dunn, DCNR's Director of Recreation & Conservation, who was one of the program's founders in the 1980s, says, "We support this program because we know that people who experience nature will take better care of it. Sojourns offer opportunities not only for paddlers but also for local communities to celebrate their river."

The sojourn program is also a favorite of the American Canoe Association (ACA), which partners with POWR to make sure that the trips are safe. The ACA's Director of Recreation Outreach Nancy Lear, says "Paddling down a river transcends age and is a great way to see the world from a different perspective. The sojourns offer people a safe, fun way to start paddling or to paddle new rivers."

Other partners include the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, which offers many of the educational programs during the trips. The Fish & Boat Commission is the state agency that officially designates water trails as part of the Pennsylvania Water Trails System. Many river sojourns follow official Pennsylvania water trails.

Want to know more? The following entry from a make-believe sojourner's diary is a composite of the kinds of experiences that POWR staff has had or heard about:



A Few Days in the Life of a Pennsylvania River Sojourner

Day One. Sam and I drove from our home in State College to the starting campground, arriving at about 4 p.m. Set up tent while the kids joined a volleyball game. Met our fellow paddlers around the picnic tables over a hot dinner, and retreated to a bonfire while a bluegrass band played. Nice people! Turned in at 11 p.m.

Day Two. Awakened at 7 by the smell of bacon and coffee. Met our new friends at breakfast and then attended a safety briefing. Shane asked me to hold his Gameboy. Loaded into our canoes and paddled at leisurely pace 4 miles between wooded banks with pink rhododendrons. Couldn't stop taking pictures. Tracy so excited about the wildlife—beaver, great blue heron and osprey. Conversed with elderly couple as we passed them—turns out their daughter went to high school with Sam. Small world!

Day Three. Woke at 7. Kids were already up. Shane and his new buddy inseparable already. French toast breakfast, hot coffee, safety review, and shuttle to the put-in. Back on the water, and the creek soon opened up into a wide, sparkling expanse. All the different colored boats made a fleet on the river ahead and behind. Good thing we brought water guns since an impromptu battle broke out between kids and adults. Kids won. Sandwiches and ice cream for lunch at noon. Sam and I tried out a tandem kayak before we returned to our rental canoe. May have to buy one when we get back. At the takeout the kids found a swirling eddy that would float them around and around. Sam and I jumped in, too, until we smelled the pizza. Tonight's talk was given by two civil war re-enactors. Fascinating.

Day Four. I'm starting to wish we had signed up for all seven days. No one wants to go home, but Sam and I have to go back to work tomorrow. Fortunately, Shane's new friend doesn't live too far from home. Packed up after breakfast while Sam got a ride back to the put-in to pick up our car. After three days on the water, it's hard to believe it's only an hour away. Took a vote on the way home—we'll be back next year for the whole sojourn and maybe try one on the Susquehanna or the Allegheny, too.



2007 Pennsylvania River Sojourn Schedule

Alle-Kiski-Connie Sojourn.	May 17-20, 2007
Stony-Kiski-Connie Sojourn.	May 31-June 3, 2007
Schuylkill River Sojourn.	June 2-8, 2007
Clarion River Sojourn.	June 9-10, 2007
Juniata River Sojourn.	June 9-16, 2007
Lehigh River Sojourn.	June 22-25, 2007
Delaware River Sojourn.	June 24-30, 2007
Susquehanna River Sojourn.	July 16-22, 2007
Lake Erie Sojourn.	August 16-19, 2007
Ohiopyle Falls Festival.	August 25, 2007
Chartiers Creek Sojourn.	To be announced.
Susquehanna River Sojourn. (West Branch)	To be announced.

Keep Pennsylvania Fishing:

Investing in Our Future

The faces of PA anglers have been slowly changing. The population of PA is getting older and the number of older Pennsylvanians is increasing, while the number of younger residents is declining. Only Florida and Arizona have older populations. It makes sense, then, to reckon that Pennsylvania anglers are also getting older.

Every five years the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) conducts the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. This survey lets the USFWS collect and analyze data on participation, expenditures, participant characteristics and other information. Comparing the data for 1991 and 2001 shows a change not only in the age of anglers, but also in how many of them are fishing (see the graph on this page).

No matter how you slice it, these days fewer people aged 34 and younger are fishing. One of the biggest reasons is a lack of time. We have learned that many activities compete with fishing for participants' free time. Today's youth have more recreation/entertainment options than their parents and grandparents did. They live in a world much different from the one we experienced as kids. It is in our best interests to view these ideas from their eyes, not from those of our own childhood.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
National Survey of Fishing, Hunting & Wildlife-Associated Recreation

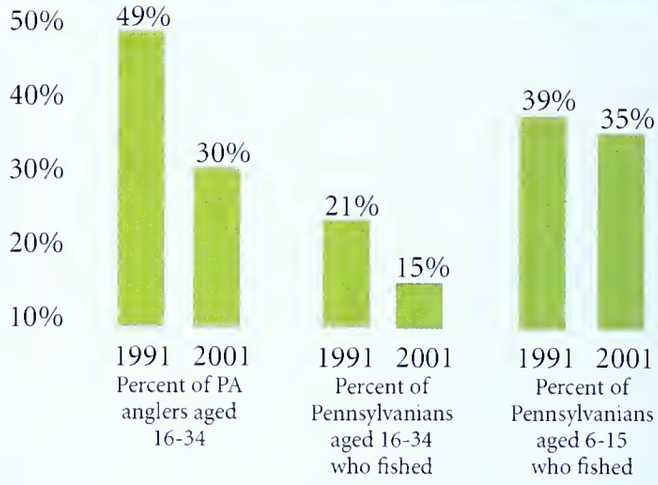




photo-Art Michaels

Investment in the future

It is often said, "Today's youth are tomorrow's future." While that may be true, today's youth also have a hand in shaping that future. They also have a hand in shaping the present because keeping them fishing as youth is an important predictor of angling activity as adults. We know that fishing at an early age is important to a person's participation as an adult. We also know that youth who fish through their teen years are likely to be anglers as adults. If we wait until tomorrow to act, it may be too late.

The Governor's Youth Council for Hunting, Fishing and Conservation (GYC) has taken a strong stance in support of the current youth fishing license concept. The Commission and GYC believe that the youth fishing license is an investment in the future of fishing made by young anglers. Here is why:

Youth sports and video games—activities that compete with fishing—require a fee. This revenue is reinvested back into these products and programs for youth. These dollars

can fund things such as promotion, development and delivery, research into changing needs and learning what works and what doesn't work. Currently no such mechanism exists for fishing.

Consider that youth currently can fish for free, but participation is declining. On the other hand, those activities with a pricetag (some many times more expensive than the proposed $5) are doing well, and show tremendous growth.

The youth license is a way for young anglers to have a stake in their future and in the future of fishing in Pennsylvania. Revenue from the youth license will be reinvested in programs and services that add to fishing's appeal and make it easier for youth to stay involved in fishing.



Photo-Keith Edwards

Reaping the benefits

A generation of new anglers means that new opportunities and new programs and services may be needed to attract youth to fishing and to keep them fishing. Today's youth consider technology like cell phones and computers to be necessities. Within an instant, they can access a world of information and communicate with an unimaginable number of others. That means we must look to new ways to reach out to youth.

We plan to spend time listening to youth to learn what they want and need to fish more, and what they need to get more of their friends fishing. We also need to help those working with youth and families to do more. Here are some of the programs that may result from the revenue of a youth license:

- High-tech ways to get the information to youth and families with youth on where to fish and how to fish.
- Creation and support of sportfishing clubs.
- Expansion of the Education Grant Program.
- Provide special programs and events for youth, their friends and families.
- Materials and programs for use by those already working with youth such as teachers, leaders and sportsmen's clubs.

Any new program or initiative will be based on what we know works, and more importantly, what youth want. We will also routinely assess which initiatives are working, and we will change or eliminate those that aren't working.

Adding value

We believe that the license will not be a barrier to fishing, but that it will add value to the sport. Is the soccer program ($75) or video game ($30) "better" or worth more than fishing because fishing is free? Today's youth are ready and willing to make the commitment and investment to get kids fishing and keep them fishing.

If licensing were a deterrent to youth participation, we would expect states with youth licenses to have lower rates of participation than states without a license. However, of those 20 states requiring some form of youth fishing license, youth participation is higher than the national participation rate in 18 of those states. Some of these states, such as Wyoming and Idaho (which require some form of license) have more than 50 percent of their youth fishing. States with large urban and suburban populations, as well as Pennsylvania, have experienced declines in youth participation, below that of the U.S. as a whole. Most of those states do not require a youth license.

It is important to note that none of the states currently requiring youth licenses directs revenue from that license back into youth programs as does the Commission proposal.

The concept of a youth fishing license is not new. It has been proposed several times in the last 40 years. What makes this concept unique is that it directs revenue from the license to products and services benefiting the youth buying the license as well as to other youth.

Since the world they live in has changed from the time we were kids, so must our perspective on a youth license. We believe the future of fishing lies in our hands today, and that the youth license is an investment in the present and future of fishing in Pennsylvania.

For more information on the youth license concept or fishing and boating, visit the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us.

The Youth License Concept's Key Points

- Revenue from the youth fishing license will be spent on programs and initiatives benefiting youth and their families.
- Revenue from the youth fishing license will be used only for new programs and for expanding programs, not for maintaining current Commission programs or activities.
- Law enforcement will treat encounters between officers and youth as an opportunity to inform instead of punish.
- License administration will allow for license sales in quantity to clubs, organizations and others who are interested in sponsoring youth. Exemptions to the license requirement will be offered for educational programs.
- The youth fishing license will be inexpensive and for all anglers aged 12 to 15.

LARGEMOUTH BASS
Angling in Western Pennsylvania

by Kelly Houghton

A "Big Bass" lake is a waterway in which special regulations apply to enhance the quality of the bass population, including largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, or a combination of each. It has earned this designation because the Commission area fisheries manager has studied the water, and bass population data indicates that the waters have the potential to increase the fish population in the 12- to 15-inch range and beyond. Page 7 of the 2007 *Pennsylvania Fishing Summary* details the program and lists the waters governed by these regulations.

Many Big Bass lakes are in northwestern and southwestern Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania's northwest corner includes some of the state's best bass lakes. These waterways include Lake Wilhelm, Presque Isle Bay, Lake Arthur, Kahle Lake and Shenango Lake.

Lake Wilhelm

M.K. Goddard State Park, in Mercer County, holds one of western Pennsylvania's top bass fishing lakes. The 1,860-acre Lake Wilhelm is an outstanding warmwater fishery that supports quality largemouth bass, black crappies and bluegills. The bass maintain one of the densest and most stable populations in the state, and according to State Park Manager Donald Campbell, Lake Wilhelm is one of the best bass fisheries in northwest Pennsylvania.

Commission Area 2 fisheries technician Tim Wilson also considers Wilhelm to be the leading bass lake in the Allegheny River Watershed. "Lake Wilhelm surpasses all others, especially with big fish," Wilson says. Lake Wilhelm's also appealing because you can fish for largemouths year-round. Wilson has additionally discovered the spring season to be very productive. The spring season is a catch-and-release time known as "no harvest," beginning April 14 and running through June 15.

The best baits are spinnerbaits and silver and white crankbaits. In fact, recent bass fishing tournaments held on the lake have frequently been won by those who fish deeper structure.

Presque Isle Bay

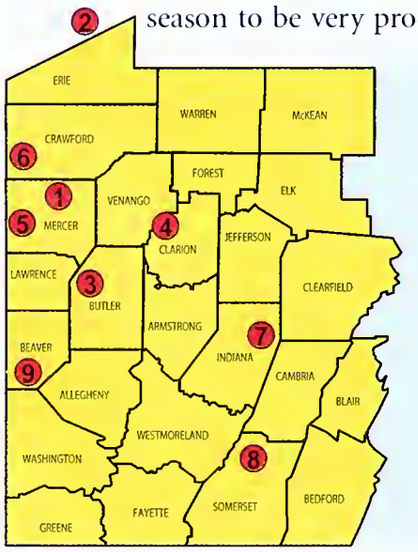
Presque Isle Bay, in Erie, is another one of the hottest spots for largemouths in the western part of the state. This huge bay was recently named a Big Bass water and holds excellent numbers of both largemouth and smallmouth bass.

Hotspots for boat anglers include Misery Bay, Marina Lake, Horseshoe Pond and the area from Perry's Monument to the channel. The northern edge of the bay is the shore of Presque Isle State Park, and it provides shoals and rocks, structure that bass favor.

If you're casting for largemouths, try wading along the weed beds of the north shore, from the head of the bay to just east of the administration building. The "trench," a shoal reaching a depth of 23 feet, is also located along this shore and has produced good bass numbers. Fishing the trench in the spring has been known to produce numbers.

Lake Arthur

Lake Arthur, in Moraine State Park, Butler County, is a 3,225-acre waterway carrying a reputation as a great bass lake. Anglers pull very big bass from its waters, and although comparably good lakes like Wilhelm may have denser bass populations, Lake Arthur includes some of the



Largemouth Bass Angling in Western Pennsylvania

1. Lake Wilhelm, M.K. Goddard State Park, Mercer County.
2. Presque Isle Bay, Presque Isle State Park, Erie County.
3. Lake Arthur, Moraine State Park, Butler County.
4. Kahle Lake, Clarion County.
5. Shenango Lake, Mercer County.
6. Pymatuning Lake, Pymatuning State Park, Crawford County.
7. Yellow Creek Lake, Yellow Creek State Park, Indiana County.
8. Quemahoning Reservoir, Somerset County.
9. Raccoon Lake, Raccoon State Park, Beaver County.

state's biggest bass. According to Wilson, Lake Arthur's also well-known for the numbers and hefty sized bass that are caught through the ice in the winter. The lake also includes hybrid striped bass.


photo-Art Michaels

Kahle Lake

Northwest Clarion County's Kahle Lake, near Knox, is a Big Bass lake with exceptional bucketmouth fishing in the spring and summer. However, thick, dense weed beds form in late summer and fall, so if you can overcome the aquatic vegetation, you can still catch lots of fish. "Although the bass may not be the 20-inch, 5-pound bass like Wilhelm's, the numbers are there," Wilson says.

Shenango Lake

Shenango Lake, near Hermitage in western Mercer County, is another lake worth visiting. Many bass anglers are attracted to its waters for the bass, walleyes, muskellunge and variety of panfish. However, Shenango is an unlimited horsepower lake, so summer angling for bass may prove less productive than working it in the spring and fall.

Pymatuning Lake

The largest reservoir in Pennsylvania, Pymatuning Lake, encompasses more than 14,500 acres of fishable water. Area 1 fisheries biologist Freeman Johns says that Pymatuning should not be overlooked because the largemouth and smallmouth bass populations continue to expand. The home of this great reservoir, Pymatuning State Park, hosted 43 bass fishing tournaments in 2006. It's obviously getting attention from bass anglers.

Many lakes in southwest Pennsylvania also have great black bass fishing. Commission Area 8 Fisheries Manager Rick Lorson recommends the top waterways from a top 10 list that his region established based on numbers of largemouths or smallmouths caught that were over 12 to 15 inches. Lorson considers the best largemouth lakes to be Cross Creek Lake, Yellow Creek Lake, Quemahoning Reservoir and Raccoon Lake.

Cross Creek Lake

Cross Creek Lake, in Washington County, is a bass angler's haven. The 244-acre lake is owned by the county and is located in a 3,300-acre county park. There is excellent bass fishing throughout the year and plenty of shore fishing. "Cross Creek Lake sticks out as the top in the southwest," says Lorson. The lake has been around since the 1980s and is fertile with ample structure and a high density of nice-sized bass. The lake's only bass species is the largemouth.

Cross Creek is also a Big Bass lake with a 10hp limit. A county permit is also required for boating.

Yellow Creek Lake

Yellow Creek Lake, in Yellow Creek State Park, may be the second-best bass bet in southwest Pennsylvania. Located in Indiana County, this 720-acre fertile lake includes both smallmouth and largemouth bass. Largemouth bass tend to inhabit the shallow waters of the lake's southern part. Smallmouths can more commonly be found on the steep-sided, deeper north shore.

Quemahoning Reservoir

If you're looking to fish a bigger waterway, try the 899-acre Quemahoning Reservoir, in Somerset County. Although the reservoir is an infertile lake—plankton and plant life are scarce—the bass are there. To fish this large, clear lake, you must work lures deep and look for structure. Quemahoning Reservoir also has a growing smallmouth bass population, and it's a Big Bass and Panfish Enhancement lake.

Raccoon Lake

Raccoon Lake, in Raccoon State Park in Beaver County, has a dominant species of largemouth bass. The lake covers only 101 acres, but it's anything but small when it comes to largemouth bass density. One reason may be that Raccoon Lake is a trout-stocked waterway.

"There is a tendency for any lake stocked with trout to be a great lake for bass fishing," says Lorson. However, Lorson says, this has nothing to do with the bass using trout as food, and anglers should plan their strategies accordingly. The Commission studied bass predation on stocked trout some years ago. The Commission found that bass consumed very few trout, and other predators like walleyes, northern pike and tiger muskies consumed very few stocked trout.

The majority of anglers who fish Raccoon are casting for trout instead of bass, so less competition for largemouths means more fish left for the serious bass angler. Gizzard shad and sunfish are the lake's main forage fish, so the best bait options may be spinnerbaits or silver and white crankbaits.

"takemefishing"™ at a Family Fishing Program

Looking for a great way to spend some time outside with your family and help them learn basic fishing skills (and maybe polish your own)? The Fish & Boat Commission's Family Fishing Program (FFP) may be just the ticket. These programs provide an opportunity for busy families to learn basic fishing skills, to learn where they can fish close to home, and to learn what equipment to buy.

Why a Family Fishing Program?

More than 80 percent of all Americans have fished at some time in their life, likely as a child. The majority of today's anglers were introduced to fishing before age 12. But children who fished often grow up to be busy parents, shuttling their own children from one activity to another. They also have little free time available to fish or teach their family how to fish. No doubt, they want their children to experience those same good times outside, together as a family.



photo-Alice Stitt

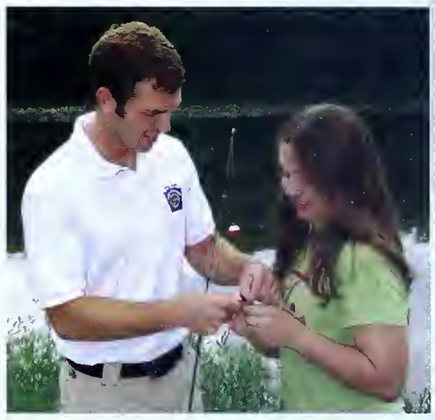
The 3-hour (or longer) program includes instruction and hands-on practice with knot-tying and rigging.

The Fish & Boat Commission designed FFPs with these parents and their children in mind. The Commission offers programs throughout the year at state and local parks and through other organizations. The Commission provides rods and reels, bait and other equipment. A fishing license is not required of those 16 and older to participate in a Commission Family Fishing Program. The only requirement is that parents must be accompanied by a child!

Ingredients

The 3-hour (or longer) program includes instruction and hands-on practice with:

- Basic equipment
- Knot-tying and rigging
- Bait
- Casting skills



These programs teach valuable fishing skills such as baiting a hook.

In addition, the Commission provides instruction on fishing regulations, fish, and the places where fish live and fishing opportunities close to home. We also provide parents with information on the types of equipment they need.

To learn more about Family Fishing Programs, see the events roster in P*A Angler & Boater* magazine, or visit the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us. Drop us a line at P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg PA 17106. For more about fishing, visit www.TakeMeFishing.org.

Family Fishing Programs give busy families a chance to spend time outside together while learning (or polishing) basic fishing skills. All the ingredients for a lifetime of fond memories are there—just add water.



photo-Alice Stitt

Families will spend time together while learning basic fishing skills such as casting.

Hosting a Program

If your organization or club is interested in sponsoring or hosting a Family Fishing Program, drop us a line at: PA Fish & Boat Commission, Family Fishing Programs, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg PA 17016.

The Fish & Boat Commission's Fishing Tackle Loaner Program

The Fish & Boat Commission's Fishing Tackle Loaner Program (FTLP) includes more than 40 sites statewide where you can borrow rods, reels and a tackle box full of hooks and other terminal tackle for free. Whether you are giving fishing a try for the first time or returning to a childhood activity, the equipment can be borrowed in much the same way as you'd borrow a library book.

This program is a partnership between the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, the Future Fisherman Foundation, site sponsors and several fishing tackle manufacturers. FTLP sites make it easy for anyone to borrow fishing tackle. The Commission hopes that those making the loans will enjoy fishing so much that they will become hooked for life as anglers. Groups conducting angler education programs in the community may also borrow this equipment for their events and programs.

Here is a select list of some FTLP sites, just one per region. More are added each year. To view the complete list, visit the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us or drop us a line requesting the list.

Northwest Region (partial listing)

County	Location	Hours
Butler	Moraine/McConnells Mill State Parks 225 Pleasant Valley Rd. Portersville, PA 16051 724-368-8811	April-October 8 a.m.-4. p.m

Southcentral Region (partial listing)

County	Location	Hours
York	Gifford Pinchot State Park Campground Office 2200 Rosstown Rd. Lewisberry, PA 17339-9787 717-432-5011	Daily 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Southwest Region (partial listing)

County	Location	Hours
Westmoreland	Keystone State Park 1150 Keystone State Park Rd. Derry, PA 15627-3679 Loyalhanna Bassmasters 724-668-2939	Regular hours Memorial Day-Labor Day or by appointment

Northeast Region (partial listing)

County	Location	Hours
Luzerne	Ricketts Glen State Park RR2 Box 130 Benton, PA 17814 570-477-7780	March-Oct Fri.: 3 p.m.-5 p.m. Sat.: 12 p.m.-1:30 p.m. Sun.: 9 a.m.-12 p.m. or by appointment

Northcentral Region (partial listing)

County	Location	Hours
Centre	Black Moshannon State Park 4216 Beaver Rd. Philipsburg, PA 16866 814-342-5960	April-Labor Day Sun.-Sat. 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Southeast Region (partial listing)

County	Location	Hours
Bucks	Nockamixon State Park 1542 Mountain View Dr. Quakertown, PA 18951 215-529-7300	Marina office April 1-Sept. 15 Thurs.-Mon. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Becoming a Fishing Tackle Loaner Program Sponsor

Is your group or organization interested in becoming a Fishing Tackle Loaner Program Site or sponsor? The Commission adds new sites each year. Contact the Commission to learn how. You can request more information by contacting: PA Fish & Boat Commission, Fishing Tackle Loaner Program, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg PA 17106-7000.

www.fish.state.pa.us

Lower Allegheny River Catfish

by Jeff Knapp

Living a long stone's throw from the Allegheny River, I hear a lot of stories about the fish found there. The best stories always have to do with catfish. The good tales have two common elements: Scuba divers and huge catfish. And they always end with the declaration, "The diver saw catfish in there bigger than a man...said he'd never dive in there again."



The lower Allegheny River has big catfish, both channel cats and flatheads.

photo-Mike Bleech

Even though the stories, or perhaps the diver's assessment of the fish, seem inflated, there's no doubt the lower Allegheny River has big catfish, both channel cats and flatheads.

The lower Allegheny River is considered the 72 miles of navigable water between the East Brady area and the Point in Pittsburgh. Along that length the river takes on many faces. Industry fronts the river in spots, as do many communities large and small.

Eight lock and dam systems elevate the river to a level at which commercial barge traffic can travel. Current is present, but the impounding effect of the dams reduces it, particularly during the summer when flows tend to drop. While some barges still run the river, sand and gravel mostly, the majority of the river traffic is recreational.

During 2005, the Fish & Boat Commission registered some big cats from the Allegheny River in the Angler Award Program. The second-largest channel catfish of the year came from the Allegheny, a 23-pound, 2-ounce forktail caught by Stephen Manukas. Tyrone Taylor caught the Allegheny's third-biggest shovelhead (cat talk for a flathead) for that year, a 35-pounder.

Catfish location

Catfishing need not be a complex pursuit. In fact, that's one of its attractions—that and the chance of catching big, strong fish. Finding river cats isn't difficult, either.

As with any fish species, finding catfish means locating the habitat they prefer. The association of river cats and deep river holes is a strong and correct one. A few winters ago, during a slow day on walleyes on such a deep pool, I suggested to my boat partner Deron Eck to drop the underwater camera to determine what flavor the fish were that were apparent on my sonar unit's screen. In the clear water, despite the 30-foot depths, Eck was able to observe hundreds of channel cats hovering just off the bottom.

Spring is giving way to summer now, and catfish won't be as tightly grouped as they were in the wintering hole where Eck and I observed them. But they will still favor the deeper holes. Add some cover like sunken wood, pilings and rock piles and the odds are even greater you will find at least a few cats there.

One spot that will always hold catfish is the plunge hole located below the dams. All of the dams on the Allegheny are of the fixed crest design—that is, the water flows over the top of the dam. This creates a scouring effect. A deep hole is formed, one that often quickly rises to the shallows a distance downriver. In some cases, submerged wood (logs, tree trunks, branches) is lodged in this sharp-breaking ledge. The shape and size of the plunge hole varies from dam to dam, but this basic layout occurs at each dam.

For the most part, this is a shore-fishing deal. There is a restricted area below the dams, one that runs perpendicular to the river from the downriver end of the approach wall leading into the downstream lock chamber. Typically, a buoy line is in

place during the summer, marking the edge of the restricted area, which is off limits to boats. But the physical layout of each spot varies. At some locations the back of the scour hole (ledge) is located in safe water, and can be a good spot for boat anglers, particularly if sunken wood cover is present. In any case, do not approach a dam if you're in a boat.

Shore anglers will find fishing opportunities below the dams on the lock chamber side at some of the locations. A good example is near Clinton, at Lock and Dam 6. Anglers there can park on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers property and walk down to the river. Hydroelectric power stations are located at four of the eight dams on the river. You'll find fishing piers at all of those locations, which include Lock and Dam 5, 6, 8 and 9. Gravel bars located at the mouths of feeder streams are other good spots to fish from shore.

Boat anglers should concentrate on the deep holes that are often formed near the merger of feeder waters. Dredge holes are also present in the river, and they can be found with the aid of sonar. Bridge piers are overlooked spots. The current often scours deeper depressions at the base of piers. Wood often hangs there.

Tactics

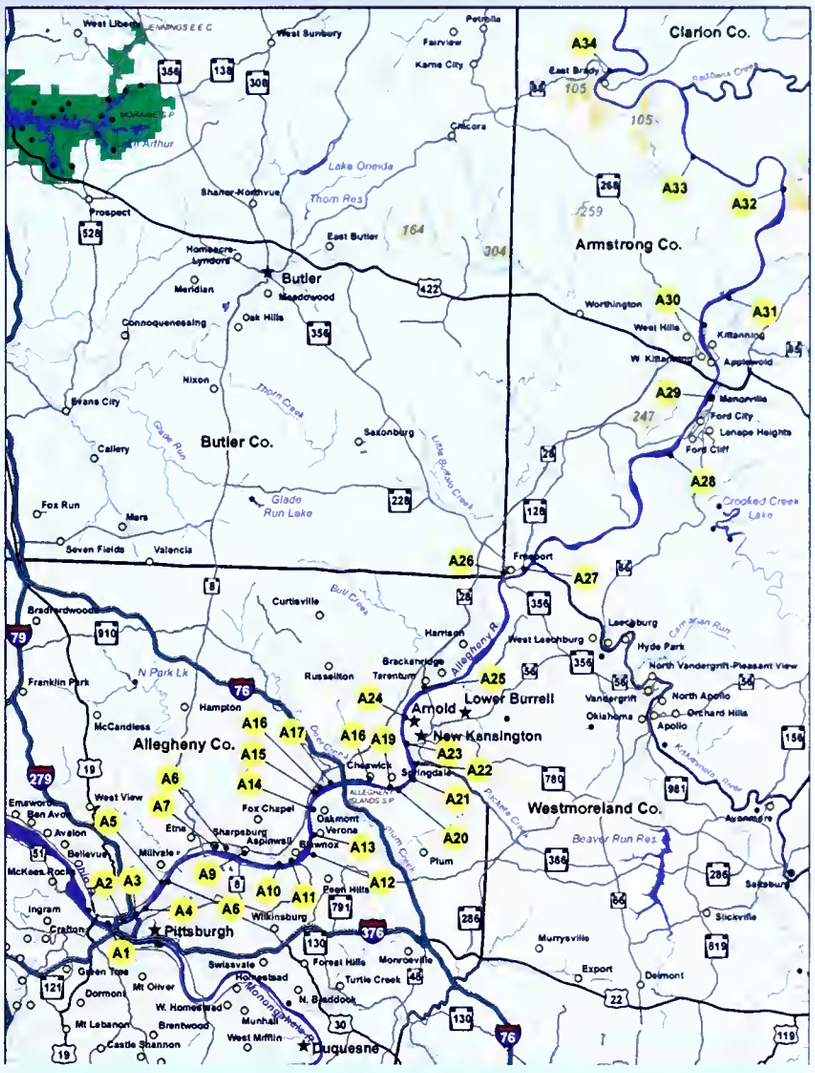
During daylight hours, larger cats, flatheads in particular, are tougher to catch. But smaller channel catfish, ones in the 1- to 3-pound range, can be readily taken.

For before-dark fishing, I drift over deeper pools using the same boat control methods I do when jigging for walleyes when the water is cold. Using medium-power spinning gear, I bait up a leadhead jig and fish it right under the boat as it drifts along with the current. Ribbon leeches work well, as do chunks of hotdogs. I've never messed with commercial concoctions developed for catfish, but they are still worthy of a thorough tryout.

As the sun sets, the picture changes, both literally and figuratively. The cover of darkness signals the start of the evening catfish bite. From the same general areas that produced smaller channel cats you can expect action from bigger forktails and flatheads.

Now's the time for the shore angler to set up on a rock bar. The bigger catfish will be moving shallower to feed. Boat anglers should anchor on the flat located above a deep hole, positioning the craft so lines cast downriver will cover the area where the deep hole rises to the flat.

If you have heavier gear, this is the place to use it. Baitcasting tackle, including reels with clickers, is ideal. Use a slip sinker rig with enough weight to peg the bait to the bottom. This is usually a half-ounce and up, depending on the current. Use strong hooks at least in size 1/0.



map: Mike Hudonuz

A1	Heinz Field	A18	Cheswick Fishing Pier
A2	6th Street	A19	Springdale
A3	Washington's Landing	A20	Blair's Marina
A4	Allegheny Marina	A21	Logan's Ferry Marina
A5	Millvale Boat Launch	A22	Ole Locke No. 3
A6	Lawrenceville/40th Street Bridge	A23	Lighthouse Marine Sales
A7	13th Street Marina	A24	Arnold Pier
A8	Silk's Crows Nest Marina	A25	Tarentum
A9	Aspinwall Marina	A26	Buffalo Creek Launch
A10	Allegheny River Boat Club	A27	Freeport Public Ramp
A11	Blawnox Launch Site	A28	Rosston
A12	Outboard Haven	A29	Kittanning
A13	Verona	A30	Kittanning Marina
A14	Oakmont Public Access	A31	Cowanshannock
A15	O'Hara Landing	A32	Templeton
A16	Deer Creek	A33	River's Edge Campground
A17	Hamar Marina	A34	Brady's Bend

For bait, I favor live chubs and suckers trapped from local creeks. Flatheads prefer live bait, so I fish at least one outfit with a live version. As the bait dies from use, I cut it into chunks or fillets and fish them for channel cats.

If you're not going to hand-hold the rod, place it in a rod holder. For the shore angler this can be a simple forked stick. Leave the bail open on spinning reels and the reel in free-spool on casting reels. If the reel doesn't have a clicker, use some type of strike indicator, like a bobber clipped to the line between the rod guides, or a creased aluminum soda can placed over the line between the reel and the first guide.

Lower Allegheny River catfish provide excellent fishing opportunities and a great way to spend a hot, summer evening.

Crayfish Flies for Smallmouths

by Vic Attardo
photos by the author

Patience is an essential attitude when using crayfish flies for smallmouth bass. Smallmouths often attack crabs by stunning them, sometimes repeatedly, before sucking them in. The smallie points head-down, vacuums the crustacean into the front of its mouth, and then spits. This may happen several times before the natural is ready for the gullet.

When crawling a crayfish fly across the bottom, I often feel an initial "tick," which is the strike signal the fly line and rod transmit to my hand. Immediately I raise the rod to set the hook. If the point is embedded, that's great, because the fight begins. But frequently when I set the hook, the fish isn't there, especially in still water.

After missing the hit, the tendency is to strip in the fly and make another cast. Resist this tendency. Instead, leave the fly where it is, if possible, because there's a good chance the bass will return for its meal.

Of all the pattern and material information to be handed out—and it's worth expressing—the patience factor, based on the bass's natural feeding method, is the one least preached. And it could be the concept that connects more smallmouths to a crayfish fly than any other.

As for crayfish patterns, basically there are two types you can build. One is highly elaborate and attempts to incorporate all the physical features of a crawdad. The other is more impressionistic. Surely, the impressionistic patterns contain some physical features of the natural, such as length and bulk, but its most important characteristics are color and movement.

As a rule, I tend to use replica flies when fishing still water—a lake or an area in a pool that lacks heavy current. In these spots, I find replica patterns effective and workable. On the other hand, I use impressionist patterns in places with noticeable current—mostly streams and rivers but also lake areas with water movement.

There are several reasons for my distinctions. First is that replica patterns don't fish well in moving water. I find they tend to roll and twist and generally don't offer a good presentation or hooking aspect. In clear water, I see replica patterns tumbling in the current more like a piece of debris than a living crayfish. Of course, a bass may open up for a crayfish in such a predicament, but it's a hard hook set.

When working current, you can't stop the fly unless you're using a ton of weight, and this isn't an enjoyable practice. In current, an impressionist fly glides along the bottom. The bass has to react differently in this situation—the fish often gullets the natural crayfish on the drift. Sometimes the bass will still cough out the claw-waving crayfish and follow it along before making another vacuum swallow. Commonly the bass stays with the crayfish, or the fly, as it drifts into the slow waters of an eddy or pocket, and then the fish strikes. In this scenario, you still need patience because if the fly is picked up after the initial "tick," there's no chance for a return strike.



Replica flies work well in still water. Impressionist patterns work better in streams with currents.

Another reason I use impressionist patterns in moving water is that they can roll and tumble all they want because, in effect, they are built "in the round."

When I choose a fly, I want it to look good whether it's briefly resting in a pocket or drifting along with the current, and often realistic patterns don't present this attitude. Also, the impres-

sionist dancers I make are made either with a marabou or soft hair tail, so the bass can instantly get the point.

An important aspect of the impressionist flies is its weight. Most often, I overwrap the first seven to 10 turns of the lead wire or lead substitute near the hook eye. This process gives the fly a front-end load and while it won't stand the fly up, it does give the lure a nice jigging action.

The second method of weighting impressionistic flies is with dumbbell eyes. Tie the lead in the shape of a dumbbell bar, across the top of the hook behind the eye. When worked, the fly will turn over so that the hook point is up and the eyes are on the bottom. Drifting along and then stopped in a pocket or eye, the dubbed marabou on the dumbbell fly waves like the little legs and antennae of the natural.

Even with realistic patterns that have claws or pincers, I often use a body of dubbed marabou underbody for its lifelike movement.

With the realistic design, you need a shell, one or two claws and sometimes a tail. Fortunately, all of these can be made from a number of standard materials.

For the shell, use bucktail, red squirrel tail, Swiss straw or Furry Foam. Some of the best-looking patterns are made with Furry Foam because it has bulk and is easily segmented. Bucktail is a pain to work with for a shell, so I avoid it. Squirrel tail can also be unruly but it produces a "soft shell" feel that smallmouths seem to love. Swiss straw is easy to work with and bass like its sparkle and crinkle. If I need to tie some realistic crayfish flies quickly, I use a barred-olive marabou-dubbed body under olive Swiss straw.

Overall, I find the claws on realistic patterns problematic. Materials that are useful are the same red squirrel tail; body feathers from a pheasant, grouse, or duck; bucktail; and a personal favorite, Super Hair.

Super Hair, a synthetic that comes in sliced cords, is stiff but not hard, and it's quite crinkly and catches light beautifully. Tied as a spread claw, a bunch of Super Hair holds its shape. Place a drop of glue at the base to keep the bunch connected.

However, the problem with Super Hair is it's one of those materials that causes a fly to twist, so I don't use patterns with Super Hair in heavy currents. But for great realism, I tie a crayfish with a shell of Furry Foam, a marabou-dubbed body and claws with two colors of Super Hair, usually olive and tan with an olive-back shell.

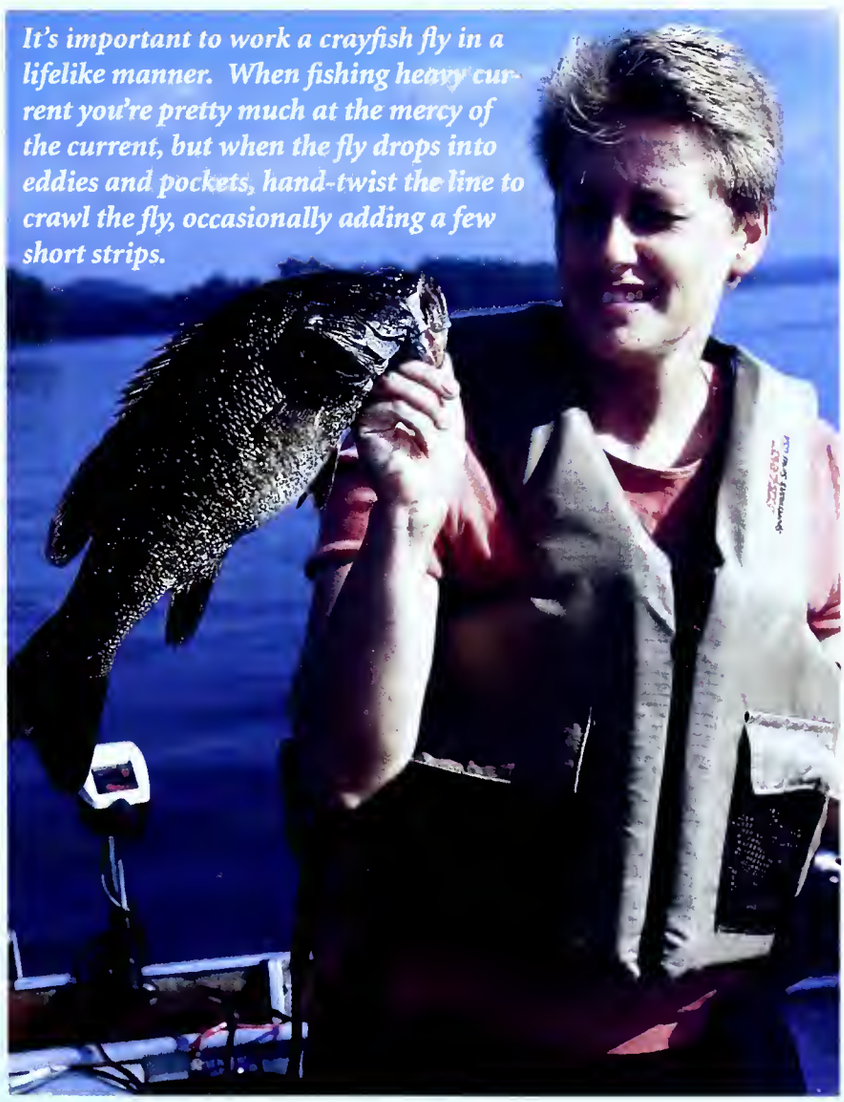
In medium-size streams where there is only moderate current followed by many eddies and pockets, a fly with a red squirrel shell and red squirrel claws makes a nice realistic pattern for clear water. If you keep the claws short, it doesn't roll as much as some stiff patterns.

Something I like on all the dubbed underbodies of crayfish flies is a ball of orange dubbing at the tail. This represents the egg mass the female carries. Even if the naturals don't have eggs at the time, a fly with this blob of orange has great appeal to bass.

In the past, I extended the shell material over the hook eye to make a tail. For the most part, I've given this accent up because it's too difficult to tie the line knot with the eye so covered. The exception is a Swiss straw fly because this material bends very easily to tie a line knot, and then it reflattens to create the tail.

In addition to the patience factor I noted earlier, it's important to work a crayfish fly in a lifelike manner. When fishing heavy current you're pretty much at the mercy of the current, but when the fly drops into eddies and pockets, I hand-twist the line to crawl the fly, occasionally adding a few short strips. Also, I want a hinge of line hanging from the rod tip so that when the bass picks up the fly it doesn't feel immediate resistance.

While good patterns are certainly important, patience and lifelike movement go a long way in making a crayfish fly catch fall smallmouths when natural crayfish are a main target.



It's important to work a crayfish fly in a lifelike manner. When fishing heavy current you're pretty much at the mercy of the current, but when the fly drops into eddies and pockets, hand-twist the line to crawl the fly, occasionally adding a few short strips.

RIGHT NOW for 'Gills and 'Seeds

by Darl Black photos by the author

"Don't know if it's the bright colors and funny shape, their feisty attitude or just the name, but catching 'em brings smiles to young and old alike," my father used to say. "They can brighten up your outlook when things aren't going your way."

Dad was referring to bluegills and their sunfish kin, pumpkinseeds. To him they were all "sunnies." Never a year went by when we didn't spend a few days fishing for them when they moved shallow to spawn in the late spring.

These days I pursue many species, but I still enjoy fishing for "sunnies." And I'm not alone.

I'm accompanied by my wife on practically every bluegill expedition. She knows that with the right presentation, there will be numbers of fish caught and the time between strikes will be minimal. She also likes the way sunfish pull on very light tackle, using their wide bodies to increase resistance in the water thereby creating the sense of battling a much larger fish.



With the right presentation, you can catch numbers of fish and the time between strikes will be short.

When you add to that the desirability of bluegills for the frying pan, you have the reasons that make saucer-shaped sunfish among the state's most relished species.

Kissing cousins

Bluegills and pumpkinseeds are the most widespread members of all sunfish family members in Pennsylvania. Because they are often found side by side in the same areas of a lake, it's hard to fish for one without catching the other.

Both begin spawning at roughly the same time during late spring when water temperatures in the shallows reach the mid-60s. Pumpkinseeds spawn primarily during May and early June, but bluegills have been reported to spawn through the summer.

Location changes

During the early spring coldwater period, bluegills and pumpkinseeds can be fickle feeders. But as water temperature climbs closer to 60 degrees and spawning time, these fish feed more aggressively. Then once spawning commences, males become defenders of individual beds. As sunnies complete the spawning process, they move to weedbeds, deadfalls, stump fields, rock outcroppings—the types of cover most often associated with largemouth bass.

Areas protected from the prevailing winds and waves are preferred spawning sites. Sunfish seek areas of loam soil covering a sandy or gravel bottom. This lets them sweep the softer material away to the firmer material below, forming a pocket depression for a nest.

Unlike crappies that generally camouflage their nesting sites among some type of vegetation or black bass that prefer to bed next to or slightly under some submerged object, sunfish create nesting sites in the open. The earliest bedding 'gill and 'seed colonies are the shallowest—in 1- to 3-foot depths. By mid-June, remaining spawning colonies are usually a little deeper, making sight-fishing more difficult. You'll also see spawning colonies on offshore humps where the water temperature has stabilized.

In clear water, a spawning colony is visible in shallow water. The high number of beds in a small area reminds



Bluegills and pumpkinseeds are often difficult to distinguish. That's a bluegill on the left; the pumpkinseed's on the right.

you of a lunar landscape. Dingier water requires a little more effort to locate beds.

Downsized lures

Single hook jig-style lures dominate the panfish angler's tackle box. Many fishermen pursue bluegills and pumpkinseeds with the same lures they use for crappies. Yes, you'll catch some sunnies, but not nearly as many as when you downsize baits intended specifically for the smaller mouths of 'gills and 'seeds.

Next time you have both species in your livewell, examine the open mouth of a small crappie and the mouth of the biggest bluegill. The comparison is not even close: Crappies have huge mouths; sunfish have tiny mouths.



Tiny hand-tied jigs in various combinations of hair, tinsel, yarn and marabou work very well under a bobber.

A size 4 or 6 hook in a 1/16-ounce jig is standard for crappies. But you'll miss a lot of sunnies with something that large. Instead, go with a micro-size jig—a 1/64-ounce head or lighter to hook practically every bluegill and pumpkinseed that strikes. You can use a slightly heavier 1/32-ounce head if you carefully select ones with smaller-than-usual hooks. Size 8 is the largest single-hook jig that I use when targeting 'gills and 'seeds.

The downsizing theory also applies to any soft lure body slipped onto the jighead. One of the most popular crappie lures is a slender 2-inch grub with a boot-shaped swim tail. Crappies have no problem inhaling the entire lure. However, sunnies inevitably get only the grub tail into their mouth, resulting in their tearing off the action "boot." A few years ago, the company that originally designed the 2-inch crappie grub came out with a 1-inch version to eliminate tail-taking, and therefore catch more bluegills.

Several other firms have downsized a favorite soft-plastic crappie lure to a 1-inch version for smaller mouths. You can also get hair or feather jigs in the smaller sizes.

I fish sunfish jigs on a limber 6- to 7-foot ultralight rod with a soft, flexible 4-pound copolymer line. Fluorocarbon or abrasion-resistant monofilament line will reduce casting distance considerably with these outfits because the stiffer line doesn't flow effortlessly off the spool.

My presentation in the prespawn and post-spawn period is very simple. When fishing 3 feet or less of water, make a long cast and retrieve slowly. If I'm fishing the lighter micro jigs, which don't have enough weight for casting, I use a clear casting bubble about 2 feet in front of the lure. For fishing 4- to 5-foot depths, go to a heavier head (with small hook), eliminate the casting bubble, and count the jig down before beginning the retrieve.

Bobber rigs

Casting and retrieving an ultra-small jig with a soft-plastic body works perfectly for aggressively feeding sunfish. These active fish have no qualms about running down the lure. However, when sunnies are in non-feeding mode or when they're defending their nest in a spawning colony, go with a specialized presentation.



For bluegills and pumkinseeds, use smaller offerings than you'd use for crappies.

Enter the bobber and jig. When fishing a jig very slowly—deadsticking it at times—with the aid of a bobber, I tip it with several maggots.

The bobber and maggot-tipped jig are hardly new. It's what my Dad used over 40 years ago. The concept remains the same, but today we use improved tackle and a different jig. Back then the only jig that Dad used was a tiny one-color split-tail grub on a hand-poured 1/32-ounce leadhead. These days I use a hand-tied tiny craft hair/marabou/tinsel jig (or a "fly," as some anglers call them).

These micro-size hand-tied tidbits come in a variety of colors from muted to gaudy. At times, finding the right color trigger is as important as any part of the presentation, so the best bet is to have an ample selection on hand.

You can use either a small plastic clip-on bobber—I like the pear-shaped ones—or a traditional cork float with a center peg. If you use the cork, you will need to feed the line through the cork before tying on the jig. Fix the depth setting for the bobber or cork so that the jig hangs a few inches above the bottom (or just above submerged vegetation if you're fishing over a grass or moss bed).



Tipping a hackle ant with several maggots is better than using worms.

The distance between the float and the jig will generally be 10 to 30 inches, depending on the water depth. This adjustment is for shallow water; a deepwater presentation with a slip float is different.

I alternate the following retrieve options until I find the one that works best: (1) reel very slowly and steadily so the jig barely skims the bottom or weed cover; (2) pop the bobber or cork on the surface to attract the attention of panfish, and then pause for fish to swim up to take the jig; or (3) reel quickly for a couple of feet, which results in the jig swinging up near the surface, and then pause the bobber for 30 to 60 seconds so that the jig falls slowly back to rest just above the bottom. That slow fall repeated throughout a retrieve is very inviting to panfish.

For bedding 'gills and 'seeds, generally the most effective presentation is popping the bobber followed by a pause. Attempt to manipulate the bobber so that during each pause the jig settles directly over a dished-out bed that's guarded by a panfish. After a few minutes of disturbing a colony with casts and splashing hooked fish, the 'gills or 'seeds will likely shut down. In that case, move to the next colony. Besides, it's not a good idea to remove all the sunnies you plan to take home from the same bedding area.

Catching bluegills and pumpkinseeds in the spring isn't rocket science. Nor is it as presentation-intense as chasing muskies, bass or walleyes. But that's part of the charm.

AIDS TO NAVIGATION:
WATERWAY ROAD SIGNS

by Kelly Ann Sharp

The Uniform State Waterway Marking System was developed to convey to the small-vessel operator in particular, adequate guidance to indicate safe boating areas by pointing out the presence of either natural or artificial obstructions or hazards and marking restricted or controlled areas. The Aids to Navigation (ATON) System is made up of information marks, regulatory marks, and the "lateral system."

While driving, we rely on road signs to advise us of our location, the distance to a destination, and most importantly, the hazards we may encounter. The ATON system works in a similar way. This system was designed as simple shapes and colors to mark navigable channels and hazards, and provide information. Aids to navigation help guide boaters by warning them of dangers, advising them of special marine situations, and aiding them in finding their way. Most often these waterway markers are informational or regulatory buoys used to mark restricted areas or controlled areas, such as "Boats Keep Out" or "Swim Area." These buoys are white with orange geometric shapes. Each shape has its own meaning that you, as a boater, should readily recognize.

✓ **An open-faced diamond signifies danger.** You may find these types of buoys close to dams or other turbulent water.

✓ **A diamond shape with a cross centered within indicates that boaters should not enter that area.** These buoys might be found in areas that are designated as swim areas or near dams.

✓ **A circular shape indicates certain operating restrictions.** These buoys address most regulatory restrictions for an area, such as Slow No Wake, speed limits, and other regulatory restrictions.

✓ **A square or rectangular shape contains directions or other information and/or instructions.** These buoys could include anything from marking a marina entrance to providing directions to a recreational area.

Beacons are also ATON and may be located on land or in the water. They are non-floating, fixed aids to navigation that act as a signal or indicator for guidance or warning. Lighted beacons are called "lights," and unlighted beacons are called "day beacons."

The lateral system is consistently used throughout the United States to define a waterway's port (left) and starboard (right) side. These ATON indicate which side of the aid a vessel should pass when traveling upstream or downstream. The most important characteristic of this kind of aid is its color. Boaters often remember red marker buoys as the "3R" rule—"Red, Right, Returning." This means that red buoys should be passed on the starboard (right) side proceeding upstream. Green buoys are kept to the port (left) side of the boat.

There are other widely used buoys that boaters should recognize immediately:

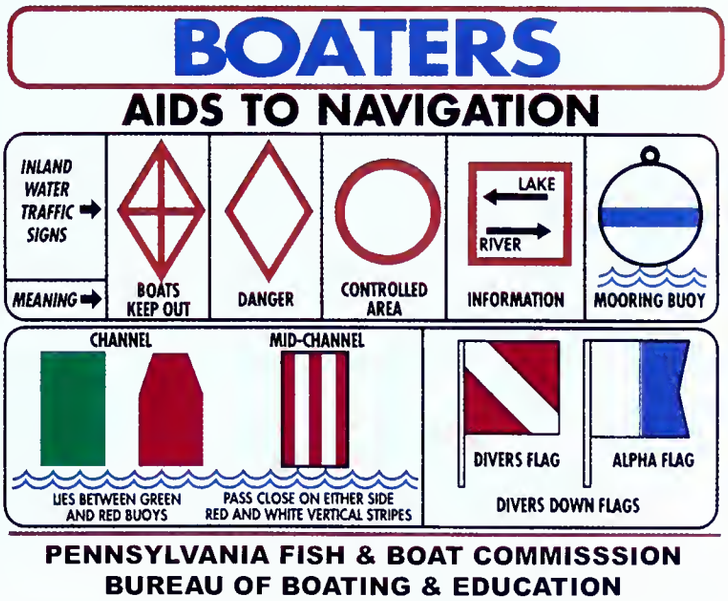
✓ **Safe Water Marker Buoys** (also referred to as "mid-channel" buoys) show that there is navigable water all around the buoy. These buoys are striped red and white.

✓ **Special Marker Buoys** aren't used to assist in navigation as much as they are used to indicate special areas, such as pipelines and cables. These buoys are solid yellow.

✓ **Mooring Buoys** are not used to assist in navigation, but they are used to show moored boats. These buoys are white with a blue horizontal band.

Buoys can be carried away, moved off station, and vandalized, so it's important that you become familiar with the waterway on which you're boating. If you recognize that an ATON is missing or moved, you should immediately notify the nearest PA Fish & Boat Commission regional law enforcement office. Your help will ensure the safety of boaters and quick repair and/or replacement of the aid.

Placement of ATON in the Commonwealth requires a permit in most cases. State agencies, municipalities, and other groups interested in installing any floating structure (buoys, floating docks, swim floats, ski jumps, slalom courses, etc.), must apply for permission from the PA Fish & Boat Commission by completing the Application for Permit to Install Floating Structures and Private Aids to Navigation (PFBC Form-227) at least 30 days before the date of installation. This form is available on the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us. On the main page's left side, hold your cursor over "Permits & Forms," and in the drop-down menu, click on "Boating."



Eastern Timber

by Andrew L. Shiels

Snakes are members of the Class Reptilia and the Order Squamata, which also contains typical lizards and the legless, or worm, lizards. Snakes are further divided into the suborder Serpentes containing 11 families and some 2,700 species worldwide. Two families are represented in Pennsylvania. Our 22 snake species belong either to the Colubridae (19 species) or the Viperidae families (three species). Pennsylvania snakes range in size from the eastern worm snake (*Carphophis amoenus amoenus*) and smooth earth snake (*Virginia valeriae ssp.*), which reach lengths of only 7 to 11 inches, to the black rat snake (*Elaphe obsolete obsoleta*), known to reach lengths of nearly 8 feet.

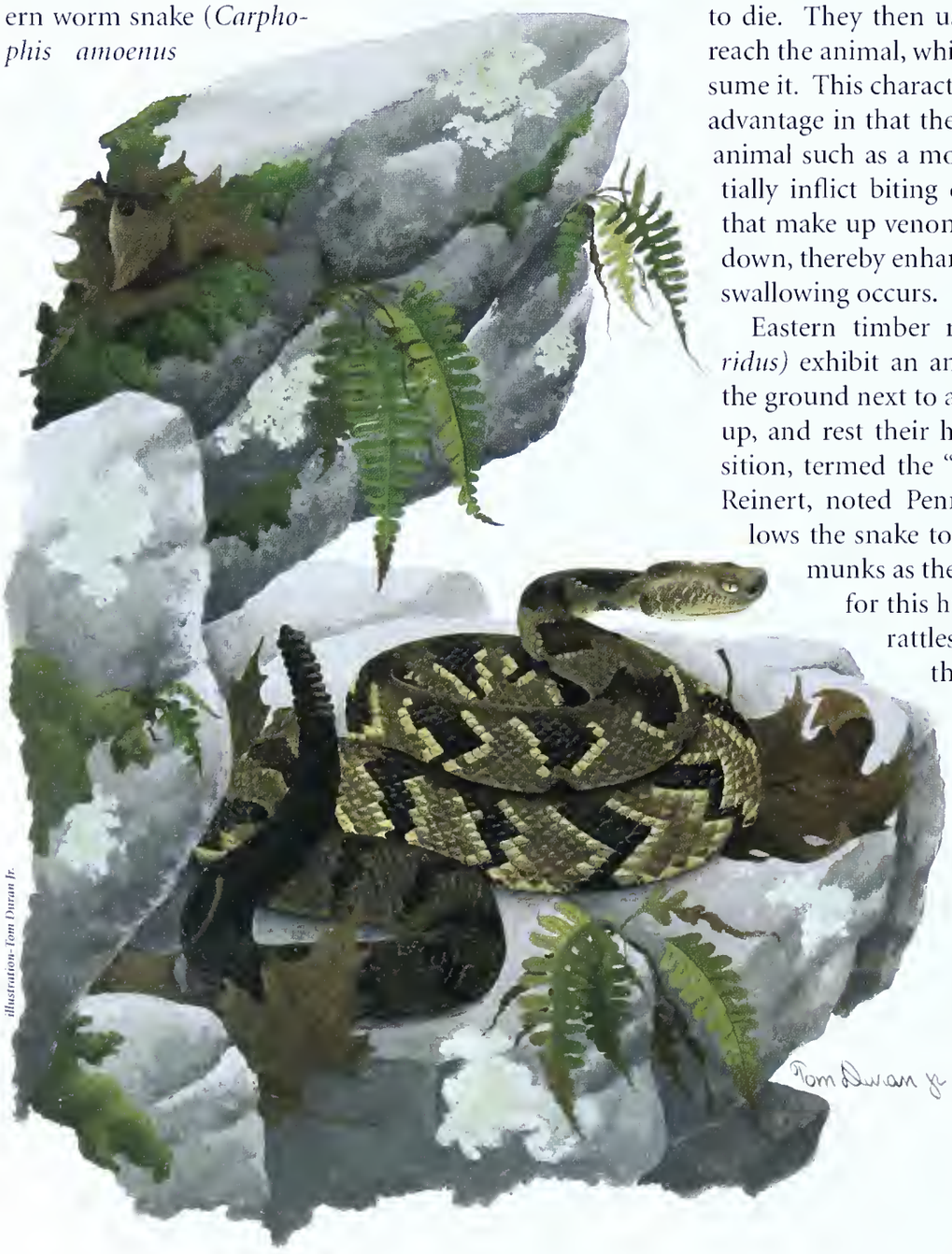


Illustration-Tom Duran Jr.

Eastern timber rattlesnakes, Eastern massasauga rattlesnakes (*Sistrurus catenatus catenatus*), and the northern copperhead (*Agkistrodon contortrix mokasen*) use venom to strike their prey, which then travels off a short distance to die. They then use their scent-trailing capabilities to reach the animal, which is almost certainly dead, and consume it. This characteristic provides these species with an advantage in that they do not risk struggling with a prey animal such as a mouse or chipmunk that could potentially inflict biting damage. Additionally, the enzymes that make up venom have already initiated tissue breakdown, thereby enhancing digestion processes even before swallowing occurs.

Eastern timber rattlesnakes (*Crotalus horridus horridus*) exhibit an ambush method whereby they lay on the ground next to a fallen log or limb, stretch their neck up, and rest their head and chin on the log. This position, termed the "Reinert Posture" by Dr. Howard K. Reinert, noted Pennsylvania rattlesnake researcher, allows the snake to feel the vibrations of mice or chipmunks as they run along the logs. Their fondness for this hunting approach may be why timber rattlesnake encounters by people walking through the woods often occur when stepping over a log.

The Viperidae, or pit vipers, possess another unique system, which is important in such a feeding strategy. Pit vipers contain a heat-sensing organ, or "pit," located on the side of the head at the bottom of a triangle formed between the eye and the nostril. Zeroing in on moving prey, delivering an accurate strike, and then following up on dying or freshly dead prey are all improved by the use of these heat-sensing pits.

Perhaps the most important fact that people want to know about a snake when they see one is whether

Rattlesnake

it may be venomous. Encountered on a trail or in a basement, people should be able to determine whether or not the snake they see is potentially harmful. All Pennsylvania native venomous snakes possess:

- an indentation, or pit, on each side of the head between the eye and nostril.
- a vertically elliptical eye pupil resembling that of a cat.
- a single row of scales on the underside of the tail.

Rattlesnakes usually display one or more rattles. However, rattles can be missing because of injury or natural causes.

Non-venomous Pennsylvania native snakes do not possess facial pits, their eye pupils are round like those of a human, and there is a double row of scales on the underside of the tail.

The eastern timber rattlesnake is a large, venomous, heavy bodied snake known to reach lengths of over 55 inches in Pennsylvania. More typically, females average 36 inches in length and males average 43 inches in length. Timber rattlesnakes have dark-brown or black chevron markings or V-shaped crossbands on a yellow, tan, brown, or black body. Two color forms are most often seen. The black phase, or dark morph, features a black head and dark eyes. The light phase, or yellow morph, has a light head and light eyes. The pupils are vertically elliptical, and there is a heat-sensing pit on each side of the head between the eye and the nostril.

This snake prefers higher-elevation woodlands with a diversity of habitat types including rocky outcrops, reverting clear cuts, open meadows, stream corridors, blueberry thickets, and utility rights of way. Basking habitat is extremely important and may consist of talus slopes, boulder fields, or isolated rocks in open areas. Over-wintering and basking sites are often located on south-facing or southeastern-facing slopes at higher elevations on the mountains. Logs and stumps are used as ambush sites.

Timber rattlesnakes have been recorded from 53 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. Their distribution in the Commonwealth is correlated to the Appalachian range from the southcentral counties through the northcentral and northeastern counties, the Allegheny Plateau of the northwest, the Laurel Highlands in the southwest, and the Pocono Plateau of the northeast. They are absent from the counties along our western border and the southeastern corner.

Timber rattlesnakes emerge from their over-wintering dens in late April or early May and remain active until October or November, depending on air temperatures. They move from winter sites to basking areas, which may be nearby, or several hundred yards away.

As ambush predators, timber rattlesnakes select high-percentage locations along logs and ledges where they wait for mice, voles, or chipmunks to pass.

Today's increasingly restrictive regulations are the result of improved scientific knowledge, which has uncovered the intricate ecology of this most famous and infamous of Pennsylvania snakes. A better understanding of their basking, foraging, and denning habitat needs has improved conservation and protection efforts during development and land-use planning. Research into this species' distribution, populations, and ecology is essential to ensure its continued existence in the Commonwealth.

State Wildlife Grants

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission administers the State Wildlife Grants (SWG) Program funds from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for the protection of our trust species including fish, amphibians, reptiles and mussels. This program is designed for the protection of rare or declining animals and their habitats. Guided by the Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan, this program benefits all Pennsylvanians because these animals are frequently valuable indicators of environmental conditions and important components of our quality of life. For more information on SWG, see **www.teaming.com**, and to view Pennsylvania's Wildlife Action Plan, see **http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/promo/grants/swg/00swg.htm**.

Pennsylvania currently lists 15 amphibians and 22 reptiles in the State Wildlife Action Plan as "species of greatest conservation need." Amphibian and reptile species of greatest conservation need include the hellbender, eastern spadefoot toad, bog turtle, eastern massasauga rattlesnake, and timber rattlesnake. See Section 10.6 of the Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan: **http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/promo/grants/swg/nongame_plan/pa_wap_sections/10priority_species.pdf**.

Court Decision Confirms Public Ownership of Historic Resource

The state agencies responsible for the stewardship of Pennsylvania's natural resources praised a recent court decision guaranteeing the rights of citizens to have access to the Little Juniata River in Huntingdon County for fishing, boating and other recreation. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission filed suit in 2003 against Donald Beaver and other defendants who had closed a 1.3-mile section of the Little Juniata River to the public and started a private fishing club.

During a week-long trial, the agencies asked the court to confirm the Commonwealth's long-standing position that the Little Juniata River is a navigable water of the state that is held in trust for the benefit of the public.

"The court has confirmed what we have maintained throughout this process: The historically navigable waters of the Commonwealth belong to the people of the Commonwealth, and no individual or corporation has the right to restrict the public's access to these waterways," DEP Secretary Kathleen A. McGinty said. "This decision affirms the state's obligation to preserve and maintain these waters for the benefit of future generations."

DEP is responsible for protecting and improving water quality. It's also charged with regulating dams, flood-control projects and other encroachments on Pennsylvania's 83,161 miles of rivers and streams.

The issue first surfaced in 2000 when Donald Beaver began operating an exclusive fly-fishing business on the Little Juniata River at and downstream of its confluence with Spruce Creek in Huntingdon County. Beaver and his employees began excluding the public from the waterway by stringing cables across the river and posting "no trespassing" signs at both ends of the 1-mile river stretch.

The Commonwealth based ownership of the river on historical evidence of navigation and trade on the Little Juniata River dating from the 1700s, and statutory designations of the river as a public highway dating to 1794, 1808 and 1822. The Commonwealth's case drew the support of local residents and businesses and statewide organizations representing anglers and hunters.

DCNR, which administers public lands for Pennsylvania's multi-billion dollar outdoor recreation and tourism industry, joined the suit to uphold its constitutional responsibility to ensure that public resources stay available to the public.

"Pennsylvania has hundreds and hundreds of miles of navigable streams that are important public recreation assets," DCNR Secretary Michael DiBerardinis said. "This case helps us to protect the public's access to these waters."

The Fish & Boat Commission, the state agency responsible for managing and protecting Pennsylvania's fishery resources as well as the regulation and promotion of recreational fishing and boating, also praised the decision.

"The court's ruling that the Little Juniata River is in fact a public waterway makes it clear that those who fish and boat have a right to enjoy one of the state's true natural treasures," said Commission Executive Director Doug Austen. "Without access, the finest waters in the Commonwealth have little value for public recreation. So protecting the public's rights on public waters is of utmost importance to this agency and our constituents."

For more information on protecting and enjoying Pennsylvania's public lands and waters, visit the Department of Environmental Protection at www.depweb.state.pa.us; the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources at www.dcnr.state.pa.us; and the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission at www.fish.state.pa.us.

Black Bass Workshop

Anglers are invited to register for the 7th annual Pennsylvania Black Bass Workshop to be held May 4 at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center in Erie. Addressing the theme "Lake Erie Black Bass Population Dynamics," and focusing on the Great Lakes bass fishery, the event will examine bass management in Pennsylvania, New York and Ohio.

The workshop is designed to offer resource and facilities managers and anglers an opportunity to hear discussions on black bass management, habitat management, angling and other aquatic resource subjects. Boat launches and weigh-in facilities will also be discussed.

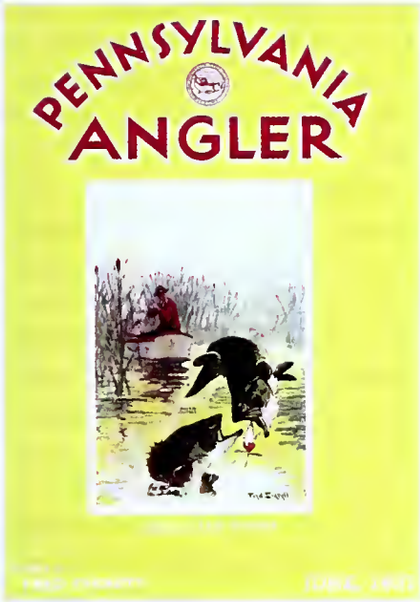
Topics will include bass population dynamics, black bass health, invasive species, and black bass management. A limited number of attendees will have a chance to experience recreational smallmouth bass fishing Saturday, May 5, on Lake Erie.

In addition to the Commission and DCNR's Bureau of State Parks, other workshop co-hosts include PPL, Pennsylvania Bass Federation, New York Bass Federation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the New York Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Marsh Creek Bass Club.

For registration information and details, contact Linda Woznicki, Bureau of State Parks, 301 Peninsula Drive, Suite 1, Erie, PA; (814) 833-7424; email: lwoznicki@state.pa.us.

Program information may be obtained by contacting the Tom Ridge Environmental Center at (814) 833-7424 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

ANGLER ARCHIVES



June issues from 1934 through 1943 and the July issues of 1947 and 1948 featured an "Annual Bass Number." The word "number" then was used in the same way that we use the word "issue" today. Those "Annual Bass Number" issues included a wide range of topics all about largemouth and smallmouth bass. Our May/June issues today are similar with an emphasis on bass and other warmwater species. Note that this issue's theme is "Warmwater Fishing & Water Trails." The Annual Bass Number coincides today with the June opening of the bass season in Commonwealth inland waters. The June 1937 cover featured a Fred Everett painting of two largemouth bass hooked on the same plug. Many of his paintings, like this one, also captured the humorous side of Pennsylvania anglers, and, like many of Everett's cover paintings, the "message" of this painting endures today: Even though catching two nice bass on the same lure is unlikely, it could be an angling nightmare or a wonderful dream come true.

Governor Rendell Awards $146,000 to Protect Erie County Land for Fishing Access

Governor Edward G. Rendell recently said the state will support Girard Township's efforts to allow continued opportunities for steelhead trout fishing while helping to protect an 8.3-acre property where anglers cast their lines. Girard Township will receive two checks: A $73,000 grant from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) that is supported by Key '93, a fund generated by a portion of the real estate transfer tax, and $73,000 from the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission from the Lake Erie Access Improvement Program, which is supported by the sale of fishing permits.

"Recreational fishing annually brings in millions of dollars to local economies in Erie County, which is why it is so important for the Commonwealth to support Girard Township's efforts to provide continued public access for fishing to the community and the region," Governor Rendell said. "This grant is an investment in open space, watershed protection and outdoor recreation. It's also an investment in the region's quality of life."

Girard Township is purchasing the George Miller property. The low-lying land is mostly in the flood plain and contains 350 feet of stream frontage on Elk Creek.

The Lake Erie Access Improvement Grant Program was made possible by Act 159 of 2004, which created a new Lake Erie stamp and a combination Lake Erie trout/salmon stamp. The proceeds from the sale of Lake Erie permits are deposited into a restricted account in the Fish Fund to "be used to provide public fishing access on or at Lake Erie and the watersheds of Lake Erie."

For more information, visit the Fish & Boat Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us.

The DCNR Community Conservation Partnerships Program provides grants to protect natural resources and revitalize communities. For more information, visit www.dcnr.state.pa.us and click on "Recreation and Conservation."

Permits for Private Markers, Aids to Navigation

It is illegal to place floats, ski ramps, slalom course markings, aids, other markers, and other floating objects on Pennsylvania waters unless the Fish & Boat Commission authorizes their use and placement.

In accordance with current boating regulations, requests to establish private markers or aids to navigation on Commonwealth waterways by clubs, individuals, state agencies, municipalities, and other groups must be made in writing on Form PFBC-277. Written requests must be made to the Commission.

Float permits (Form PFBC-277) may be obtained by writing to: Aids-to-Navigation Coordinator, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000; or call 717-705-7833. Form PFBC-277 can also be downloaded for printing from the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us.

$1 Million in Boating Facility Grants

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission recently announced it was awarding more than $1.5 million in grants for the development, improvement or rehabilitation of public recreational boat launches through the Boating Facility Grant Program, a funding stream initiated by the Commission to help ensure that Pennsylvania's recreational boaters are provided with the highest quality boating facilities on Pennsylvania's waterways.

Borough of Susquehanna, Susquehanna County - $54,000. The borough will construct a new boat launch facility providing access to the North Branch Susquehanna River. The borough will install a new single-lane boat launch ramp and a gravel parking area, and it will widen the existing access road to the parking area.

City of Bethlehem, Lehigh County - $125,000. The city of Bethlehem will construct a boat launch ramp designed for canoes, kayaks and small fishing boats.

Borough of Ebensburg, Cambria County - $40,000. The borough of Ebensburg will reconstruct the boating facility at Lake Rowena. The grant will allow the borough to install a new single-lane concrete boat launch ramp, provide a paved access road and parking area, install a boarding float, and construct ADA-accessible restrooms.

Allegheny County Parks Department, Allegheny County - $65,000. The department will construct a new single-lane boat launch ramp with a bulkhead and boarding docks at North Park Lake.

Woodward Township, Clinton County - $118,000. Woodward Township will extend an existing concrete boat launch ramp into the West Branch Susquehanna River near Lock Haven. The township will also overlay the existing parking lot with an additional layer of asphalt, improve the handicap access ramp to the launch, and improve the road that provides canoe and kayak access to the facility.

Borough of Wellsboro, Tioga County - $107,000. Grant funds will be used to build a new concrete ramp, floating dock, paved access and parking areas, and handicapped-accessible bathrooms at Hamilton Lake.

Borough of Sharpsburg, Allegheny River, Allegheny County - $185,000. The borough of Sharpsburg is rehabilitating the old deteriorated boat launch facility at the 13th Street River Access. Boating Facilities Grant funds will be used to finish paving the parking area, install a retaining wall along the edge of the parking area and provide signs.

Borough of Clearfield, Clearfield County - $25,000. The borough of Clearfield will replace an existing boat launch ramp and pave the parking area at Witmer Park.

Upper Allen Township, Cumberland County - $3,000. Upper Allen Township will install a new stabilized stone canoe and kayak launch at Simpson Park that will provide access to the Yellow Breeches Creek.

County of Dauphin - $75,000. Dauphin County intends to purchase and plan the development of a 5.5-acre tract located immediately across Front Street from the existing Commission access at Fort Hunter Park, which will be used to provide additional parking space.

Silver Spring Township, Cumberland County - $23,000. The township

Fishin' from the Kitchen

Savory Pickerel Fish Cakes

by Wayne Phillips

This is the best way to prepare bony fish like pickerel.

Ingredients for four servings:

- ✔ 2-3 small to medium pickerel
- ✔ 2 small onions, diced
- ✔ 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ✔ 1 lemon, sliced
- ✔ 1 cup vegetables, diced
- ✔ ½-cup mayonnaise
- ✔ ½-half cup fresh bread crumbs
- ✔ 1 egg, beaten
- ✔ Salt and black pepper
- ✔ Butter and canola oil



photo-Wayne Phillips

Procedure

Scale and gut pickerel. Drizzle with olive oil. Season with salt and black pepper. Place lemon slices and half the onions and garlic in a baking dish. Set pickerel on top and bake in a 350-degree oven until opaque. Discard vegetables and cool the fish. Remove skin and all bones. Flake 4-5 cups of fish into a bowl. Sauté the rest of the onions and garlic with the vegetables until slightly softened. Add to fish and gently mix. Add mayonnaise, bread crumbs and egg. Form into cakes. Refrigerate for at least one hour. Sauté in butter and canola oil.

Mayonnaise flavored either with lemon and dill, tarragon and orange, or lime and thyme is perfect with the fish cakes. Baked beans and a green salad are good choices for side dishes.

For vegetables, select one or more of the following options—red pepper, kernel corn, peas, mushrooms or green onions. A combination of vegetables adds color and more flavors. Take care when turning the fish cakes because they tend to break apart easily. A nonstick pan is a benefit.

will receive funds to construct a boat launch for canoes, kayaks and small fishing boats at Willow Mill Park. Grant funds will be used to construct a new single-lane launch ramp and to provide a small gravel parking lot.

Borough of Halifax, Dauphin County - $55,000. The borough of Halifax will continue rehabilitation and expansion of the existing riverfront park boat launch on the Susquehanna River. Funding will be used for pavement of the recently improved boat launch parking lot and drive lanes, stormwater controls and landscaping.

Manor Township, Lancaster County - $3,000. Manor Township will resurface the existing blacktop on the Blue Rock River Access boat launch. A courtesy float will also be added.

Lower Providence Township, Montgomery County - $40,000. Lower Providence Township will make its three-year-old, uniquely located park more inviting to residents. Work will include paving the entranceway and parking area to the boat launch and replacing the macadam boat launch ramp with concrete to prevent erosion. The upgrades will allow for a smoother transition from the main road into the parking lot and onto the boat launch.

Lehigh County - $80,000. The county will construct two new vault toilets at the Fish & Boat Commission's Leaser Lake. Because of deterioration and vandalism, the existing toilet facilities have been closed to the public. The county will provide all operation and maintenance of the facility for the duration of the lease.

City of Reading, Berks County - $41,000. The city of Reading will renovate the boat launch facility of Kerper's Landing on the Schuylkill River. Plans include installing a concrete boat launch ramp, creation of a paved access road for boat drop-off, and making the site ADA-accessible.

Tidioute Borough, Warren County - $25,000. Tidioute Borough has entered into a long-term lease agreement with the Commission for a boat launch facility on the Allegheny River. Tidioute Borough will repave the access/parking area and place a light near the dock/ramp area for night safety.

Loyalsock Township, Lycoming County - $27,000. Loyalsock Township will construct a new permanent restroom facility at Riverfront Park on the West Branch Susquehanna River. A water access point will also be added to the outside of the restroom building for a future boat washing station.

Lackawanna County - $40,000. The Lackawanna County Board of Commissioners will rehabilitate the boat launch facility at Merli-Sarnoski Park by replacing the old deteriorated gravel facility with a new one-lane concrete boat launch ramp and boarding dock.

Lower Merion Township, Montgomery County - $95,000. The township of Lower Merion will improve the boating facility of Flat Rock Park on the Schuylkill River. Grant funds will be used to provide boaters with a separate ready area, a wider boat launch ramp, and an expanded parking area. The proposed project will be completed in two phases.

Luzerne County - $200,000. Luzerne County will improve the existing single-lane boat launch located in Nesbitt Park in Wilkes-Barre on the Susquehanna River. The work will entail widening and improving the existing single-lane boat launch, installation of floating docks, construction of a parking area, and purchase and installation of signs and kiosks.

Angler's Notebook by Jerry Bush

When seeking panfish, cast skirted poppers made with size 12 or 14 hooks. Work them over rock piles and forming weed beds. Jerk the lure frequently using short bursts to create a stir, but stop the retrieve often. Stay alert because a following bluegill or pumpkinseed might rise and strike the popper while it is still.

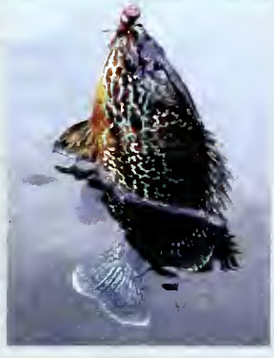


photo-Jerry Bush

The terrain surrounding a waterway will usually clue anglers of what to expect below the surface. For example, the mountains surrounding the Allegheny Reservoir slope at nearly a 45-degree angle. An angler will find that on average the water in the main channel slopes similarly.

Anglers who aren't fly-fishing enthusiasts can effectively use many types of dry flies and tiny top-water lures. Start with an ultralight spin-casting rod-and-reel combo and rig the ultralight reel with 2- to 4-pound mono. Attach a transparent float or bobber to the end of the line. Then tie a 4-foot leader of fly-fishing tippet to the float and attach a small lure to the other end of the tippet. Cast normally, but retrieve the lure in short bursts so that the movement simulates that created by fly-fishermen. The clear float provides the weight needed to cast the tiny lure.

Fish intersections—places where deep and shallow, shaded and sunny, or weeded and clear water join. Game fish often lurk near these structural edges to prey on unsuspecting natural baits and baitfish.

If you need an economical depth finder, use an ice angler's trick. Mark a length of 25-pound monofilament in 2.5- or 5-foot increments. Then roll it onto any suitable spool and attach a 2- or 3-ounce weight to the end. Identify the depths of dropoffs and submerged structure by dropping the line and noting the depth when the line goes slack.

Temporary Ban on Live Fish Transport from the Erie Watershed

The Fish & Boat Commission has placed a temporary ban on the transportation of live fish from Lake Erie and its tributary waters inland. Commission Executive Director Doug Austen recently signed an order making it unlawful to transport or cause the transport of live fish out of the Pennsylvania portion of the Lake Erie Watershed.

Waters included are Twentymile Creek, Orchard Beach Run, Sixteenmile Creek, Twelvemile Creek, Eightmile Creek, Sevenmile Creek, Sixmile Creek, Fourmile Creek, Mill Creek, Cascade Creek, Walnut Creek, Trout Run, Godfrey Run, Elk Creek, Crooked Creek, Raccoon Creek, Turkey Creek, Conneaut Creek, Ashtabula Creek and their tributaries.

This action is necessary and appropriate for the protection, preservation and management of fish. The ban's intent is to help reduce the potential spread of exotic fish species and fish diseases found in the Great Lakes to the state's inland waters.

The temporary ban goes into effect immediately and will remain in place until January 1, 2008. The Commission, under a separate notice of proposed rulemaking, will seek public comments on a permanent change to the Commission's fishing regulations. A vote on adopting a permanent regulation is expected later this year.

New State-Record Flathead Catfish

James R. Shabrach Jr., Boyertown, caught a new state-record flathead catfish in the Blue Marsh Lake Spillway, Berks County, on December 21, 2006. The flathead measured 44.75 inches long and weighed 48.6 pounds, .06 ounces. Shabrach caught the fish with spinning tackle and a crankbait retrieved slowly with 12-pound-test monofilament line.

Shabrach's record catch bests the flathead catfish state record that has held since 1985, when Pittsburgher Seymore Albramovitz landed a 43-pound, 9-ounce flathead in the Allegheny County portion of the Allegheny River.

Pennsylvania certifies state records based on total body weight. Potential state-record fish must exceed the established mark by at least one ounce, as weighed on a certified scale. To be considered for state-record certification, a fish must be caught using legal means, in season, from Pennsylvania waters open to the public without charge or fee. The Commission is the only entity that can certify an official state-record fish in the Commonwealth.

Tulpehocken, Quittapahilla Watershed Grants

The Fish & Boat Commission recently announced that $109,400 is available through a grant process for stream restoration, habitat enhancement and recreational enhancement activities on streams located in the Tulpehocken and Quittapahilla creeks watersheds. This funding is available through a settlement agreement between the Fish & Boat Commission and AES Ironwood, L.L.C., related to the operation of an electric generation facility in South Lebanon Township, Lebanon County.

Only project proposals located in the Tulpehocken and/or Quittapahilla creeks watersheds will be considered. These funds can be used for stand-alone projects or to supplement other funding for larger projects that are designed to improve aquatic habitat, water quality or recreational use.

The program will continue throughout the life of the AES Ironwood Power Plant.

Applications must be received by the Commission no later than June 25, 2007. For more information about applying for this grant program, contact the Commission at 814-359-5147 or download an application on the agency's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us.

State Wildlife Grants Program Funding

Fish & Boat Commission Executive Director Doug Austen and Game Commission Executive Director Carl Roe recently announced an invitation for project applications to the State Wildlife Grants Program (SWG). These projects address conservation needs for high-priority conservation projects for Pennsylvania's endangered, threatened and at-risk species.

The federal dollars for this program are awarded to the two agencies from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service through the SWG Program. Pennsylvania has yet to receive notification of its 2007 award from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, so funding of any selected projects depends on this award.

Project applications are due by 4 p.m. on May 4. The agencies hope to complete project selections as soon as possible, and contracts later this year.

"Based on the limited resources of our agencies, nongame species are greatly underfunded," Roe said. "SWG funding, as well as the former Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program, has provided a much-needed infusion of federal funds for wildlife conservation in Pennsylvania."

Roe also noted that, because distribution of funds is based on land area and population size, Pennsylvania has received a large proportion of these funds, ranking among the top six states in funding received to date.

"We look forward to working with our conservation partners across the state to develop the best projects for long-term conservation benefits to the Commonwealth," Austen said. "This program provides us with a great opportunity to protect these animals, which are important indicators of environmental health."

For more information and an application packet, visit the Fish & Boat Commission web site, www.fish.state.pa.us, select "Grants" from the left-hand column and then "State Wildlife Grants Program.

May 19 – 25, 2007
National Safe Boating Week. Find out more at www.safeboatingcouncil.org.

May 26 & June 3, 2007
Fish-for-Free Days allow anyone (resident or non-resident) to fish legally in Pennsylvania without a fishing license. Each year the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's executive director designates two Fish-for-Free Days. No fishing license is required to fish on Pennsylvania's waterways on these days. All other fishing regulations still apply. Fish-for-Free Days are the perfect opportunity to introduce a friend or relative to the lifelong sport of fishing. There's no better way to enjoy Pennsylvania's great outdoors than a day of fishing with the entire family.

Note that the Fish-for-Free Days were incorrect in the Mar/Apr 2007 Pennsylvania Angler & Boater. *The dates above are correct.*

May 26, 2007
Family Fishing Event, 9 a.m. to noon, John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Delaware County. Discover just how much fun fishing can be when you do it together at a Commission Family Fishing Program. Learn basic fishing skills like knot-tying, casting, baiting the hook, and taking a fish off the hook. You and your family will have the opportunity to fish—no fishing license required. All fishing equipment provided. Adults must bring a child and children must bring an adult. You'll be learning and fishing together. More information: John Heinz NWR, 215-365-3118.

June 2-10, 2007
National Fishing and Boating Week. Find out more at www.takemefishing.org.

June 3, 2007
Family Fishing Event, 9 a.m. to noon, Blue Marsh Lake, Berks County. More information: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 610-376-6337.

June 24, 2007
13th Annual "Blessing of the Fleet," Point State Park, Allegheny River Wharf, Allegheny County, starting at noon. The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary and the United States Power Squadrons will have vessel examiners available to make courtesy Vessel Safety Checks (VSCs) on any vessel requesting this free service. VSCs are voluntary and, if all the safety requirements are met, the examiner will affix a decal to the vessel that indicates that the vessel meets the requirements. This is not a law enforcement activity and, should any vessel fail to have any particular safety requirement, no citation will be given. However, polite, constructive advice will be provided to the vessel owner to encourage safety compliance.


photos-Spring Gearhart



Learn basic fishing skills like knot-tying, casting, and baiting the hook at a Family Fishing Program held by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission. All fishing equipment is provided.

In addition to the VSCs, the ABC Fire Extinguisher Company will have a mobile inspection and refill truck on hand along the wharf to check and refill marine fire extinguishers. The company will also have marine safety and first aid equipment available.

Mercy Hospital Trauma Center will be on hand with first aid and safety information, and the Coast Guard Auxiliary and Pittsburgh Power Squadron will have information on boating safety classes that will be scheduled in the area. Charts of the Three Rivers will also be available along the wharf to aid in safer navigation. "Coastie," an animated miniature Coast Guard cutter, has been invited to entertain the younger visitors to the blessing ceremonies and to encourage them to wear their life jackets when on or near the water. A limited supply of children's life jackets will be made available to any skipper who has little ones aboard who need a proper fitting personal flotation device (PFD, or life jacket).


photo-James Lindow

National Fishing and Boating Week is June 2-10.

Note: *For information and dates on river sojourns, see page 35 in this issue.*

Cast & Caught

"takemefishing"



John Spittal, Ursina, is pleased with the 1.5-pound, 16-inch crappie he caught last May in Youghiogheny River Lake, Fayette and Somerset counties. He caught the fish on a jig.



Jill Whalen, Barnesville, was fishing Rabbit Run Reservoir, Schuylkill County, last May and caught this 13.5-inch yellow perch. The perch grabbed a nightcrawler.



David H. Krapp, New Kensington, was fishing Lake Erie last May and nailed this 20.5-pound lake trout on a spoon. The catch earned him a Senior Angler Award.



Dawn Gallagher, New Providence, earned a Senior Angler Award for catching this 3-pound, 16.25-inch brook trout last May in East Fork Sinnemahoning Creek, Potter County. The brookie took a scented bait.

Anthony S. Argirakis, Belle Vernon, caught this 8-pound, 27-inch rainbow trout on a spoon last May in the Youghiogheny River Lake's dam tailwater, Fayette and Somerset counties.





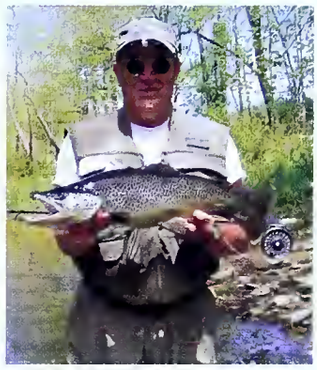
Dan Valasek, Butler, earned a Senior Angler Award last June for catching this 10.5-pound, 29-inch striped bass in Lake Arthur, Moraine State Park, Butler County. The striper took an alewife.



Jeff Randall, Harleysville, caught this 20.5-inch pickerel last May in Bruce Lake, Pike County. He used a spinnerbait to fool the fish.



Catherine Snyder, Fayette City, earned a Commission Senior Angler Award for catching this 19-inch smallmouth bass last June in the Westmoreland County portion on the Monongahela River. The fish took a nightcrawler.



Donald M. Gulvas, Penfield, caught this 7-pound brown trout on a fly last May in Driftwood Branch Sinnemahoning Creek, Cameron County. The trout measured just over 25 inches long.



Rudy Velosky, Fairbanks, was fishing Dunlap Creek Lake, Fayette County, and caught this 8-pound, 6-ounce rainbow trout. The fish was 27 inches long, and it took a scented bait.

CURRENTS

Education Grants to Re-Engage Youth

Sport fishing, boating and aquatic resource education programs aimed at youth recently received a boost with the Fish & Boat Commission's awarding more than $67,000 in grants.

Eighteen organizations received Commission Sportfishing and Aquatic Resource Education Grants to develop or expand programs that teach fishing and boating skills or educate participants about waterways.

"The Sportfishing and Aquatic Resource Education Grants Program expands on the Commission's longstanding commitment to youth education. Supporting grass-roots efforts such as those receiving grants lets the Commission accomplish its goals in angler recruitment and angler retention while leveraging our dollars," said Doug Austen, Commission executive director. "I'm excited to see some of the outcomes of these projects as research shows that good, well-structured education programs lead to kids increasing their interest in fishing and boating, improving their skills, and helping them build a greater sense of aquatic stewardship and outdoor ethics."

Statistics from the National Survey of Hunting, Fishing and Wildlife Recreation show that in 1980, 26 percent of the Pennsylvania kids aged 6 to 15 fished. In 1995, that number climbed to 41 percent, but it dropped to 35 percent in 2000. The Commission spends about $450,000 annually on such efforts. Currently 45,000 children receive the Commission's Pennsylvania League of Angling Youth (PLAY) newsletter; 8,000 Pennsylvania school teachers use the Commission's aquatic education curriculum; and more than 400 Commission fishing skills instructors teach angling basics to thousands of children.

Increased funding for grassroots initiatives is one of the cornerstones of a Commission initiative to expand youth-oriented programming dramatically with revenue generated from a proposed low-cost fishing license for anglers aged 12 to 15. This approach, said Austen, will let the program grow not only in dollars distributed, but also in the number of youth and adults benefiting from new and expanding programs.

View the list of organizations receiving Sportfishing and Aquatic Resource Education Grants on the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**.

PFBC FREE PUBLICATIONS

Please indicate the requested titles with a check mark. Single copies are free. *Limit:* 6 pamphlets.
For multiple copies of the same title, please call the Commission at 717-705-7835.

❑ **Pocket Guide**	*Commonwealth inland waters, Big Bass Program regulations*
❑ **A SmartStart for Safe Paddling**	*Safety Tips for Paddlers*
❑ **Angler Award Program**	*State records, big fish, first fish, rules and application*
❑ **Basics of Water Pollution**	*Types of water pollution, effects on resources*
❑ **Careers with the PFBC**	*Opportunity descriptions, civil service, non-civil service*
❑ **Drinking, Boating and the Law**	*Commonly asked questions with answers*
❑ **Fish Scale Sketch**	*Commission overview, mission and programs*
❑ **Fishing and Boating Map**	*Accesses and amenities, with PennDOT highway map*
❑ **Great Fishing Needs Great Habitat**	*Brochure about habitat components*
❑ **Hazards on the Water**	*Recognizing, avoiding dangers to boaters*
❑ **I Just Bought a Boat, Now What Do I Do?**	*Boat registration's frequently asked questions*
❑ **Paddle Pennsylvania**	*Water trail listings, map and launch permit application*
❑ **PA Fishes Identification Guide**	*Quick reference with illustrations, depicts over 90 fish species*
❑ **Snakes in Pennsylvania**	*Biology, identification, venomous, non-venomous*

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ *State* *ZIP*

PUBS07

Please mail entire form to: **Educational Media Services, PA Fish & Boat Commission, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000.**
Allow 3-4 weeks for delivery. Or fax to Educational Media Services at 717-705-7831.
Publication requests can be emailed with publication title(s) and complete shipping information to: **ra-be@state.pa.us**.

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Products

Name _____ email (optional) _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____



Wall Chart Sets (17" x 22" - Full Color):	Price	Quantity	Subtotal
Ⓐ Set of: Coldwater Fishes, Coolwater/ Warmwater Fishes, Migratory Fishes, Miscellaneous Fishes, Panfishes, Forage Fishes *(6 posters)*	$5.66		
Ⓑ Set of: Frogs, Salamanders, Snakes, Turtles *(4 posters)*	$3.77		
Educational Books:			
Ⓒ Pennsylvania Amphibians & Reptiles	$9.43		
Ⓓ Pennsylvania Fishes	$9.43		
Collectible Patches (fully embroidered):			
Ⓔ 2005 Pickerel Frog	$4.71		
Ⓕ 2005 American Toad	$4.71		
Ⓖ 2006 Red-bellied Turtle	$4.71		
Ⓗ 2006 Wood Turtle	$4.71		
Ⓘ NEW! 2007 Green Salamander	$4.71		
Ⓙ NEW! 2007 Northern Red Salamander	$4.71		
Ⓚ 2005 PLAY Patch-Bluegill *(25th Anniversary)*	$2.83		
Ⓛ 2006 PLAY Patch-Yellow Perch	$2.83		
Ⓜ NEW! 2007 PLAY Patch-Smallmouth Bass	$2.83		
Ⓝ "I'm a Pennsylvania Angler" Patch	$2.83		
Ⓞ "I'm a Pennsylvania Boater" Patch	$2.83		
Other Products:			
Ⓟ "Resource First" Short 16 oz. Mug	$4.71		
Ⓠ "Resource First" Tall 16 oz. Mug	$4.71		
Ⓡ "Go Fish" Game Cards	$4.71		
Ⓢ PFBC Safety Whistle	$5.66		

Products/Publications Total _____

PA Residents Add 6% State Sales Tax _____

Subtotal _____

Shipping & Handling for Orders Under $10.00 - **Add $2.00** _____

Shipping & Handling for Orders of $10.00 or More - **Add $3.00** _____

PA Angler & Boater Subscriptions/Renewals - Subscribe Today!

YES! Enter my subscription for ONE YEAR *(6 issues)* $12.00 _____

YES! Enter my subscription for THREE YEARS *(18 issues)* $30.00 _____

☐ NEW ☐ RENEWAL Account # _____ *(if renewing)*

For more products, order online at: FishandBoat.com.

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED $ _____

MAG07

Please mail entire form to: **PA Fish & Boat Commission, Educational Media Services, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000**. Use check or money order for remittance made payable to: PA Fish & Boat Commission. Prices subject to change without notice. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

2007 PFBC Photography Contest

Entry Deadline: December 31, 2007

The 2007 Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Photography Contest is intended to foster a greater appreciation for Pennsylvania's fishing and boating, and aquatic resources.

Contest winners will receive a certificate, the limited-edition magazine 75th anniversary patches, and the limited-edition 2007 nongame species patch. Honorable mention winners will receive a certificate and the limited-edition year 2007 nongame species patch.

The contest now includes a "best in show" selection from all category first-place winners. The best in show winner receives a framed 1991 trout stamp poster. The Commission began issuing trout/salmon stamps in 1991.

Winning entries and honorable mentions may appear in a contest feature article in a future issue of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater*. All entries may also be used elsewhere in the magazine, on the magazine's cover, in Commission publications, on the Commission's web site, and in Commission exhibits and other projects.

The contest will run from March 2007 through December 2007.

View the results of the 2006 contest by clicking the contest link on the Commission web site's main page, at www.fish.state.pa.us.

RULES

- The contest is open to amateur photographers (anyone who makes less than half one's annual income from taking and/or selling photographs).
- Commission employees and volunteers and their immediate family members are not eligible.
- Entries must be original works taken in Pennsylvania, on waterways with public access, and they must have been taken by the person entering the contest.
- Entries must also show adherence to Pennsylvania fishing and boating laws and regulations.
- In photographs, all boaters and anglers in boats must be wearing properly fitted, buttoned and zipped life jackets. It's encouraged that children on shore near the water should wear life jackets.
- Entrants are responsible for securing photo releases from identifiable subjects.
- Entrants may submit only mounted 35mm color slides, color prints in sizes 3 ½"x5", 4"x6", 5"x7", or 8"x10", or unmounted medium-format and large-format transparencies.
- All submissions must be in color–no black-and-white photos.
- No mounted, over-matted, framed or glassed prints will be accepted.
- Retouched or electronically manipulated entries are not allowed.
- Please do not send negatives or digital files.
- Each photo must include the entrant's name, address, phone number, location of the photograph including county, species identification (if applicable), and category, in addition to a fully completed official entry form on this page for each category entered.
- Multiple submissions are allowed, but participants are limited to a total of two entries per category.
- The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission shall have the right to digitize and use all submissions for publishing, illustration, World Wide Web display, advertising, trade, exhibits and promotion, and in any other use in any medium for any purpose whatsoever without compensation.
- Winning entries (1st, 2nd or 3rd place) from previous Commission photography contests are not eligible.
- Entrants who want their materials returned must include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with the right amount of postage and appropriate packaging to safeguard materials. ***Submissions that do not include return envelopes and postage will not be returned.***

Photo Contest Entry Form

www.fish.state.pa.us

Complete this form with each entry and mail to: PFBC Photo Contest, PA Fish & Boat Commission, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000. The deadline for the Commission's receiving entries is December 31, 2007.

Please Print Clearly

Entrant's Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail (if available): _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Categories

- ❑ 1. Seasonal Fishing and/or Boating (main focus on activity with seasonal backgrounds (snow, ice, fall leaves, etc.)
- ❑ 2. Family Fishing and/or Boating (emphasis on two or more family members)
- ❑ 3. Young Anglers and/or Boaters (photos of anglers and/or boaters less than 12 years of age)
- ❑ 4. Waterway Scenics (Impoundments) (lakes, ponds and reservoirs)
- ❑ 5. Waterway Scenics (Flowing Waters) (rivers, streams and creeks)
- ❑ 6. Reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates (animal closeups or photos with the animals as the primary subject)

I received this form from (check one):

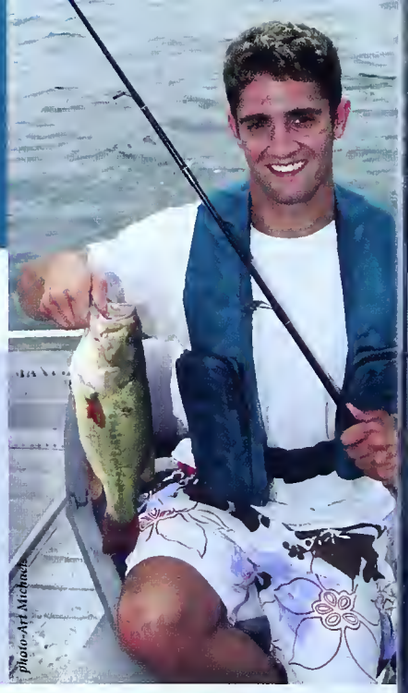
- ❑ *PA&B* magazine
- ❑ the Commission's web site
- ❑ Photo dealer
- ❑ Other (specify) _____

This form may be photocopied.

"takemefishing"

Fish-for-Free Days 2007

Saturday, May 26 & Sunday, June 3



Fish-for-Free Days allow anyone (resident or non-resident) to fish legally on Pennsylvania's waterways for the state's most popular fish for two days each year without a fishing license. All other fishing regulations still apply.

Fish-for-Free Days are the perfect opportunity to introduce a friend or relative to the lifelong sport of fishing. There's no better way to enjoy Pennsylvania's great outdoors than a day of fishing with the entire family.

For more information on *Fish-for-Free Days* or to learn more about fishing or boating, visit **www.fish.state.pa.us**.

New to fishing? Learn more at **http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/fish_fundamentals.htm**.

New WCO Class

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission last summer established its 18th Class of Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) trainees. The 10 cadets must complete an extensive 52-week specialized training program that began with some 20 weeks of instruction in law enforcement practices that meet the standards of the Municipal Police Training Act. An additional 32-week training period followed with 20 weeks of classroom instruction by the Commission at the H.R. Stackhouse School of Fisheries Conservation and Watercraft Safety and 12 weeks of supervised field training.

18th WCO Class Patch

Proceeds from patch sales are used by each WCO class to improve the PFBC's training facility and to purchase equipment used to train waterways conservation officers and deputies.



Product	Price	Quantity	Total
18th WCO Class Patch (4-inch patch)	$4.71	_____	_____

PA residents add 6% (29¢ each) State Sales Tax _____

Make check or money order payable to: 18th WCO Class. Send orders to: H.R. Stackhouse School, 18th WCO Class, 1150 Spring Creek Road, Bellefonte, PA 16823. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

Shipping & Handling _____
1-5 Patches - **Add $ .75**
6-10 Patches - **Add $1.30**
11-15 Patches - **Add $2.00**
16-20 Patches - **Add $2.60**

Total _____

Name _____

Address _____

_____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

7 25274 86892 6

July/August 2007
$3.00

Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER

In this Issue:
Raccoon Creek State Park Map
pages 32-33

Big Bass & Boats

PA Fish & Boat Commission web site:
www.fish.state.pa.us



The Keystone State's Official Fishing & Boating Magazine



PROTECT
CONSERVE
ENHANCE

Fishing and Farming



by Douglas J. Austen, Ph.D.
Executive Director
PA Fish & Boat Commission

RESOURCE FIRST
PROTECT • CONSERVE • ENHANCE

Give me a chance to explain this one because it will make sense if you can be a little patient. Anglers and boaters need to be concerned about farming and federal legislation called the Farm Bill. Every one of us who puts a boat into a lake, river or stream, or who casts a line or who even just likes to look at the water while driving by, should be concerned about what is happening in Washington, D.C., because it will directly affect your passion and recreation.

But why the Farm Bill? The simple answer is that this legislation affects the land, and what happens on the land affects the water. We cannot escape that connection and, in fact, we need to ensure that our interests are not forgotten in the messy debates and lobbying that take place in enacting any legislation. Just like the old saying, there are two things that you don't want to see—making sausage and making laws, it's often not pretty, but we need to be involved if we want the product to be palatable.

Let me give you a few examples of how Farm Bill programs directly affect all of us. There are many programs with the Farm Bill, but I am going to highlight only a few of them to illustrate the significance of this legislation. First, money from the Farm Bill provides support for dam removal. To date, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) funds, combined with other funding sources, have been used to support the removal of 11 dams, with four additional dam removal projects in the planning phase. When completed, these projects will improve the connectivity of over 120 miles of streams. By removing dams, Pennsylvania is improving passage for both resident and migratory fishes, as well as other aquatic life. Dam removal is just one of the critical habitat practices in Pennsylvania funded through WHIP.

Also benefiting aquatic resources, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) in Pennsylvania focuses primarily on water quality improvements through nutrient input reductions on livestock operations. Currently, only a small percentage of the program (less than 2 percent) is directed toward wildlife-related practices on farm operations. These practices include streambank fencing to keep livestock out of streams, native grass planting, and wildlife-friendly perennial biomass planting projects. There is untapped demand for wildlife practices in this program with the current producer demand for this program in Pennsylvania estimated to be at least four times the current annual level.

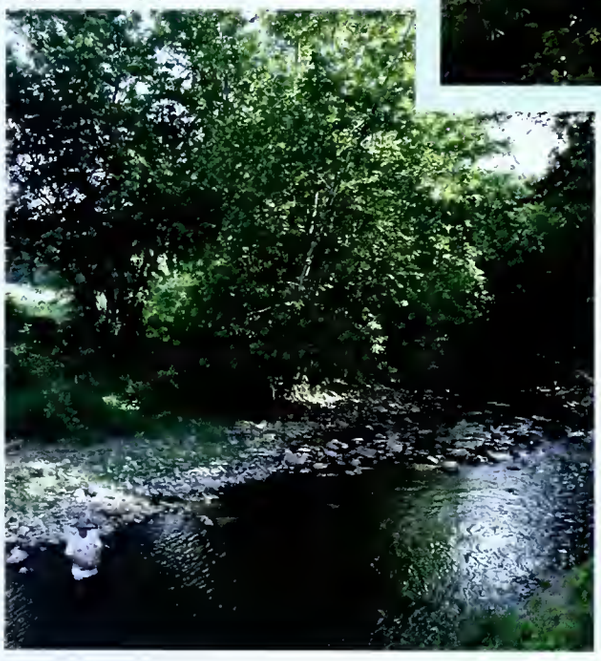
The last program I will highlight is the Pennsylvania Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), the Commonwealth's largest and most comprehensive environmental improvement program. It helps save millions of tons of topsoil from erosion, protects surface and ground water by reducing runoff and sedimentation, and increases wildlife habitat.



photos-Spring Gearhart

The Pennsylvania Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is the Commonwealth's largest and most comprehensive environmental improvement program. It helps save millions of tons of topsoil from erosion, protects surface and ground water by reducing runoff and sedimentation, and increases wildlife habitat. At right, a Juniata County farm enrolled in CREP. One of the highlighted habitats for CREP is riparian buffers (below). Forested riparian areas are vital to maintaining and supporting high-quality fisheries.





CREP combines state and federal dollars with additional funding from non-government sources to tackle specific agriculturally related environmental issues. In Pennsylvania, CREP initiatives are tailored to address the environmental concerns of the Chesapeake Bay and Ohio River watersheds, as well as the surrounding upland habitat. The program is voluntary and offers financial incentives to encourage agricultural landowners and operators to enroll targeted environmentally sensitive and potentially fish-friendly and wildlife-friendly acres of pastureland and cropland.

One of the highlighted habitats for CREP is riparian buffers. Forested riparian areas are vital to maintaining and supporting high-quality fisheries. These trees help protect streambanks and provide shading, and they eventually provide woody debris for fish habitat. CREP also helps establish native grass stands, wetlands, wildlife habitat, grass filter strips, and other land improvement practices.

PA CREP is the largest and most successful CREP in the country, with more than 178,000 acres planned or under contract and increasing, with a maximum enrollment of 265,000 acres across 59 counties, for the benefit of soil, water, fish and wildlife.

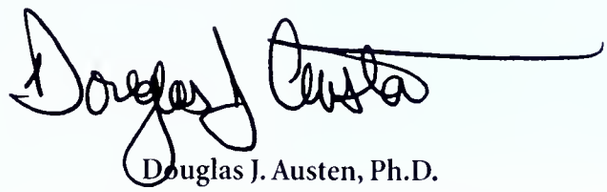
The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, in collaboration with many agencies and organizations nationwide, has been actively evaluating current Farm Bill programs. These findings and additional Farm Bill information can be found at www.trcp.org/ch_farmbill.aspx.

So although the Farm Bill may not initially seem to be an issue relevant to anglers, the benefits of even a few of these highlighted programs on fish habitat and water quality can be significant to the fish of Pennsylvania.

Fishing and books

This is the first time that I've mentioned a book in this column, but, like Oprah and her book club, I wanted to let you know about a book that has great fishing stories but also will challenge your thinking about fishing. Many of you have heard about the book *Last Child in the Woods*, by Richard Louv. He is the person who crafted the phrase "No child left inside" and was a keynote speaker at the Governor's Outdoor Conference held earlier this year.

I suggest reading his book from the year 2000, *Fly-Fishing for Sharks*, published by Simon & Schuster. You will get some good fishing stories, but what you really will read about is why people fish, and you will even be challenged about the ethics of fishing. The author is a fanatic angler, but he doesn't shy away from controversy. In fact, it is what makes the book worth reading. Get a copy and let me know what you think, but also let me know of other books that you've read on fishing that give insight into why we love the sport so much.



Douglas J. Austen, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Casting Around

Big Bass & Boats


photo-Art Michaels

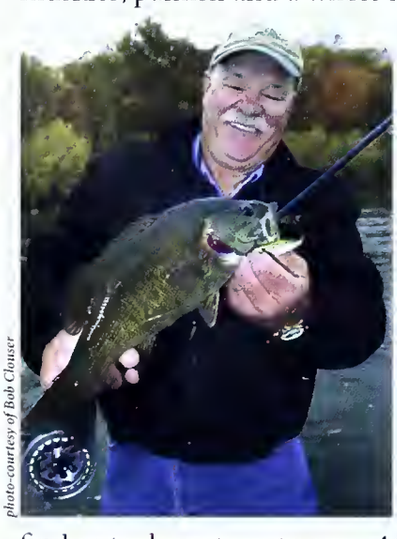
This issue's theme, "Big Bass & Boats," encapsulates the heart of summer, and in this issue there's a wealth of stuff to help in summertime angling and boating pursuits. In this issue's "Cast Away" column on **page 7**, check the species you'll find now during a fishing float on the Delaware River Water Trail, 250 miles from upper Wayne County to Trenton. Similarly, on **page 8**, regular contributor Chris Gorsuch guides us to some great smallmouth bass fishing on the Juniata River. The Juniata River Water Trail includes 80 miles from Canoe Creek State Park to Lewistown. The Raystown Branch Juniata River Water Trail encompasses 60 miles from Bedford to Saxton. Visit the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**, to view, download and print these water trail guides and other water trail guides.

Regular contributor Linda Steiner shows us on **page 24** where to find big bass in northwest Pennsylvania's smaller lakes, and on **page 35**, read about where, when and how anglers caught Pennsylvania's biggest largemouth bass in 2006 according to the Commission's Angler Award Program.

On **page 36**, regular contributor Vic Attardo points us to some great bass fishing in southeast Pennsylvania, and on **page 40**, regular contributor Mike Bleech leads us to similar great bass action in southwest Pennsylvania.

The summer 2007 PLAY newsletter, by Kim Mumper, includes much about bass and bass fishing, so check it out on **page 49**.

When you're ready to break from the bass, listen to regular contributor Darl Black's advice on **page 11** on how to catch summertime crappies, and consider regular contributor Jeff Knapp's counsel on Lake Erie's great walleye fishing on **page 17**. And speaking of Erie, on **page 14**, regular contributor Kelly Houghton explains all about Presque Isle Bay's family fishing opportunities for bass, muskies, panfish and a whole lot more.


photo-courtesy of Bob Clouser

On **page 27**, fly-fishing enthusiasts will want to check regular contributor Charles R. Meck's step-by-step instructions on how to tie a Chartreuse Clouser Minnow, a great fly for river smallmouth bass. On **page 28**, "Your Fishing Field Guide" columnist Carl Haensel introduces us to Pennsylvanian Bob Clouser and reveals the innovator's tips on fishing this classic creation.

In your waterway adventures this summer you may encounter a snapping turtle. To prepare, you'll want to read the information that begins on **page 46**.

Lastly, have you ever wondered where all those great Lake Erie steelhead come from? To find out, please turn to **page 44**.—*Art Michaels, Editor.*

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Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER

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Volume 76 Number 4

Big Bass & Boats

The Keystone State's Official Fishing and Boating Magazine

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On the cover



This issue's front cover shows Michael O'Reilly, age 16, with a nice largemouth bass on Raystown Lake. O'Reilly and his bass surely capture the essence of this issue's theme, "Big Bass & Boats." Photo by Joe Workosky.



MAIL

Favorable experience

I want to bring to your attention a favorable experience I have had over the last several months with a Fish & Boat Commission waterways conservation officer (WCO). Several months ago we contacted WCO Vance Dunbar about a serious issue with a quarry discharging clay sediment into Rapp Creek. I live alongside the creek. Rapp Creek runs for over a quarter-mile through my property, and I raised trout in the stream, having some breeding fish as large as 30 inches.

We found WCO Dunbar to be extremely concerned over our issues. He responded quickly and efficiently, taking water samples and contacting Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). To resolve the situation for the environment, WCO Dunbar organized a coordinated effort among the Fish & Boat Commission, DEP and Hanson Industries, the quarry owner.

Officer Dunbar was also instrumental in putting together a group from DEP, the quarry, and concerned property owners along the creek in a constructive, non-adversarial way.

WCO Dunbar took appropriate action for pollution violations.

I can tell you that the local residents of Nockamixon and Tinicum townships in Bucks County are proud to have Vance Dunbar representing their interests in our streams and waterways. Vance Dunbar always was professional in difficult situations concerning the quarry and the neighbors.

The Fish & Boat Commission and the residents of Pennsylvania should be proud to have someone like Vance Dunbar in his position.

In this world today so many people write complaint letters. I just wanted to write a letter to tell you what a fine citizen Vance Dunbar is and a merit to your organization.—*Michael Moss, Ottsville, PA.*

Walleye story

I wanted to share some pictures of some trophy-sized fish I caught this past year and the walleye I caught last February. All fish were caught on the Three Rivers except for the trout.

Last year was good, and I am optimistic that the rest of 2007 will be better than ever on the Three Rivers. I usually fish from Highland Park lock down to the Ohio back channel up to Braddock on the Mon. I have been a catch-and-release fisherman on these waters for 20 years. I have caught and released some very nice trophy fish this past year including hybrid stripers, largemouth bass and smallmouth bass. I then take pictures and let them go. Just recently I started to target walleyes since it has been a little too cold for fly-fishing the Erie tribs for steelies (my true passion).

Today I was on a walleye mission and the conditions seemed just right—rising water from the melting snow and ice, and slightly overcast skies. I decided to hit the rivers. I ended up on the Ohio to do some jigging from shore. I was using a 5-inch smoke-colored fluke.

After making literally 100 casts or so (from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.), I was ready to call it a day. I had a few fish hit my jig, but none was caught. Upon retrieve of my last 20-yard cast, it felt like a typical river snag off the rocky bottom. Then I felt the tug—this tug had torque. At first I thought I may have snagged a carp. I certainly didn't think that my 6-pound line would favor me. I then loosened the drag and played the fish.

After 4 or 5 minutes I got my first glimpse of this monster walleye. Thinking that I may not land this quality fish as it approached the rooted bank, I walked a few feet into the icy waters and scooped the fish onto the sandy shoreline. What a great way to finish the day! I kept this giant and will hang it on my office wall.

This is the first fish I have kept from the Three Rivers in 22 years, and I just wanted to boast about it. It is a little over 32 inches long and weighed around 13.49 pounds. I also wanted to convey that I've been boating on the city rivers for decades and all of my larger fish have come from shore fishing. There truly is no down season for me to suffer from "cabin fever."

Thanks for all the great articles over the years.—*Jeff Waldo, Bethel Park, PA.*



photo courtesy of Jeff Waldo

Jeff Waldo with his 13.49-pound Ohio River walleye.

Way to go, Jeff! We love to hear fishing stories like yours, especially those accompanied by photographs! Good luck on the Three Rivers!—*Ed.*

Cast Away

The Delaware River's Summer Fishing Opportunities

by Art Michaels

The Delaware River is a great destination for tangling with trout, smallmouth bass, walleyes, muskies, striped bass and much more. Dave Arnold, the Commission's Area 5 fisheries manager, says, "From Hancock to Hankins, NY, anglers can catch brown and rainbow trout especially when the summers are cool. Try early in the morning or in the early part of the evening." Arnold says that trout fishing can also be good into the night if an aquatic insect hatch is on. Nighttime hatches can keep the fish actively feeding.

"From Hankins to the Lackawaxen River, the trout presence gradually declines," Arnold says, "and when the trout aren't hitting, you can fish for smallmouth bass and perhaps some walleyes." But, Arnold says, smallmouth bass and walleyes begin to pick up more as a steady fishery, but smallies are caught throughout the day and walleyes hit best after dark to dawn because of the warm temperatures.

From the confluence of the Lackawaxen River to the Lehigh River at Easton, anglers are definitely going to be able to get smallmouth bass, walleyes, muskies, striped bass, panfish and carp, Arnold says. "These fish are available throughout the day, depending on how warm it is," Arnold says, "but even for warmwater fish it can get too hot for their feeding." Arnold says that even though the heat can cool the fishing, anglers should still look for gamefish at the confluences of larger tributaries.

"One the best spots for stripers is the Mongaup River confluence on the New York side just upriver of Matamoras, PA," Arnold says. "Sunfish are active all day. The heart of the muskellunge area lies in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreational Area downriver to the confluence of the Lehigh River at Easton."

"The Delaware's fisheries are diverse between Easton and the head of tide at Morrisville, about 50 miles," says Commission Area Fisheries Manager Mike Kaufmann. "The fisheries there are dominated by American shad, smallmouth bass and channel catfish, with other fisheries for redbreast sunfish, rock bass, striped bass, walleyes, carp and white suckers."

Kaufmann says that anglers catch the smallmouth bass mainly in cobble or rocky areas and that the smallmouths dominate the summer action.

"Anglers find channel catfish and white catfish mostly in pools from Easton to Morrisville," Kaufmann says. "Channel catfish are abundant and provide good bottom fishing from early April to late October." Kaufmann says that both nighttime and daytime fishing with live bait or with cut or stink baits is effective.

"Anglers catch redbreast sunfish and rock bass in the rocky shallows of pools," Kaufmann says. He notes that redbreasts are scrappy fighters and that they're readily caught with worms, plastic grubs and small spinnerbaits. "The rock bass are generally small in this stretch, but they may be caught while fishing in redbreast sunfish habitat," Kaufmann says.

Kaufmann adds that striped bass are present in the area of New Hope to Morrisville from early April until September with the most large fish there in April and May. "Throughout the rest of the river, large numbers of small stripers ranging from 8 inches to 18 inches are present from mid-June to early September," Kaufmann says. "Larger stripers can be found during the heat of the summer at creek mouths from Easton to Morrisville."

Walleyes are present in low densities from Easton to Morrisville, Kaufmann says. "Even though anglers regularly catch good-sized walleyes, the overall abundance of walleyes doesn't match that of other major Pennsylvania rivers," he says. "You'll find walleyes near large creek mouths in winter, when they become most vulnerable to angling."

Delaware River Water Trail

The Delaware River Water Trail extends some 250 miles from Hancock, NY to Trenton, NJ. The Delaware River Greenway Partnership sponsors this water trail. The group is creating maps, guides and a web site. Visit **www.drgp.org**.

For details on Delaware River access and amenities, visit the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**, and on the main page's left side, hold your cursor over "Boat," and then click on "Boating Near You." Then navigate to "County Guides."

The Delaware River and Estuary are managed with different fishing regulations from those of Commonwealth inland waters. Visit the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us** for more details.



Delaware Water Gap

photo: Art Michaels

Juniata River Smallmouth Bass

by Chris Gorsuch
photos by the author

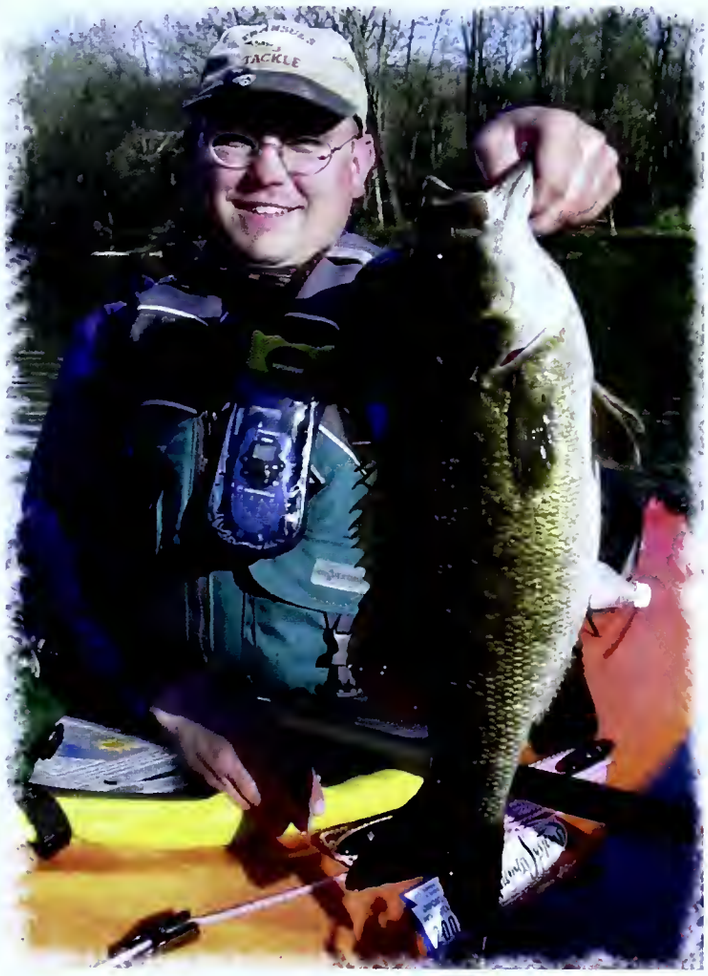


The Juniata River brings back fond childhood memories. You could just about throw a stone from my Pap's front porch to the banks of the Frankstown Branch. It will always be a special river, filled with memories of the two of us fishing together and stories of his fishing the mainstem for smallmouth bass out of a homemade plywood johnboat. Many years have gone by since my first visit to its banks, but the Juniata River continues to offer some of the finest smallmouth bass fishing southcentral Pennsylvania has to offer. Pap passed away some 30 years ago, and I would give most anything to have him experience the bass fishery this river has become. I can't fish the Juniata without thinking of the man who introduced me to fishing flowing water.

Three major tributaries form the Juniata River mainstem: The Frankstown Branch, the Raystown Branch and the Little Juniata River. The mainstem is some 90 miles long and is the second-largest tributary feeding the Susquehanna River. The West Branch Susquehanna River is the largest tributary. The Native American word "Juniata" translates to *Standing Stone.* The name alone conjures up images of the many protruding rocks and ledges found throughout the river.

The lower 90 miles of the Juniata offer a shallow river with modest flow. It also offers near-perfect habitat for smallmouth bass. Beyond the river's stone, rocks and ledges that make up this habitat, the composition of the water itself creates prime conditions for the forage that accounts for the smallmouth diet. The Juniata's alkaline content is nearly twice that of many smallmouth rivers in the state, providing an ideal breeding environment for a variety of aquatic insects and crustaceans.

Access to the river for wading, paddling and boating is fairly easy. There are nearly a dozen public boat ramps along the Juniata River in Huntingdon, Juniata and Perry counties. The majority are Commission facilities, and the rest are maintained by local governments, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and private owners. Each access area provides shoreline fishing opportunities, wading and launching shallow-draft boats and paddlecraft.



The Juniata River provides excellent smallmouth bass habitat.

Like many rivers, the water levels rise and fall throughout the year with rainfall, snowmelt and dam releases. These variations create both challenges and opportunities. The Juniata offers plenty of shallow areas, and getting around with a prop-driven craft takes some caution. The river is well-suited for boats with an outboard jet drive and nearly perfect for paddlecraft like canoes and kayaks.

Without question, crayfish make up a significant portion of the river's smallmouth bass diet. The existence of crayfish is certainly no secret, either. Locate a still, rocky pool on a warm afternoon and the river bottom is alive with crayfish activity. They are so abundant in areas that walking in such pools without their scooting under foot can be a difficult task. They are one of the preferred smallmouth foods and a keystone of their diet, so artificial baits that imitate crayfish work well. Add an aggressive nature, competitive feeding, ever-changing water conditions, and chasing smallmouth bass on crayfish imitations can be a lot of fun.

Tubes are one of the most popular crayfish imitations on the market, and for good reason. They come in a variety of colors and sizes and can be presented to match any condition. Tubes can be fished aggressively by swimming or jumping off the bottom, or left still and slowly dragged to match the characteristics of prey trying to sneak by undetected. Tubes are successful even when the fish are turned off. They are also one of the few baits that work year-round. To add to their versatility, tubes can be fished with a jig insert, Texas rigged, or Carolina rigged to meet the conditions.

Tubes of 3.5 inches to 4 inches seem to work best. The soft plastic and injected salt encourage the bass to hold on to the bait longer than many other artificial baits. This extra delay lets you sense the bite in cooler water temperatures. Crayfish don't hibernate, but they slow down significantly in cold water. As the water temperature climbs, their activity increases. Anglers must match the presentation to the conditions.

Moderate depth near current and cover usually marks productive locations. As the water rises above normal levels, smallmouths retreat to the shoreline or similar eddies.



Try medium-sized crankbaits. They cover a lot of water and imitate crayfish like no other offerings. Cranks with rattles and darker crayfish patterns work well.

Small to medium cuts or ledges that block the water flow hold bass in high water. Generally, the most aggressive bass will be at the head of these protected areas, but not always. So be sure to hit areas along the entire pool. As water rises on the Juniata River, it can get quite stained. Typically, when this condition occurs, you'll want to use a darker, larger-profile tube. Rattles can be inserted into the tube to help bass locate the bait. The river can be muddy for days, sometimes weeks. Bass adapt and will eat under these conditions.

As the water retreats to normal levels, the smallmouths will be on the move, often away from the banks. They are always relating to current and will move to find the desirable current and prey. When locating transitioning bass on the Juniata River, a medium-size crankbait is hard to beat. It will cover much water and imitates crayfish like no other bait. Fan-casting to various areas will help locate active fish. Cranks with rattles and dark crayfish patterns work very well. Lip size must be matched to the depth, but crank speed can help control subtle depth changes. It is important that the crankbait bounce off the bottom, rock or wood.

When grass beds mature, crayfish will invade them. They, too, are relating to food and structure. Smallmouth bass know that these grass beds offer their favorite fast food. Do not ignore grass beds and deep pockets on the Juniata River. Tubes and rattletrap-style baits are the best lures to drag near or through the edges of these beds. Fishing them successfully takes some practice, but don't avoid the areas in and around grass beds.

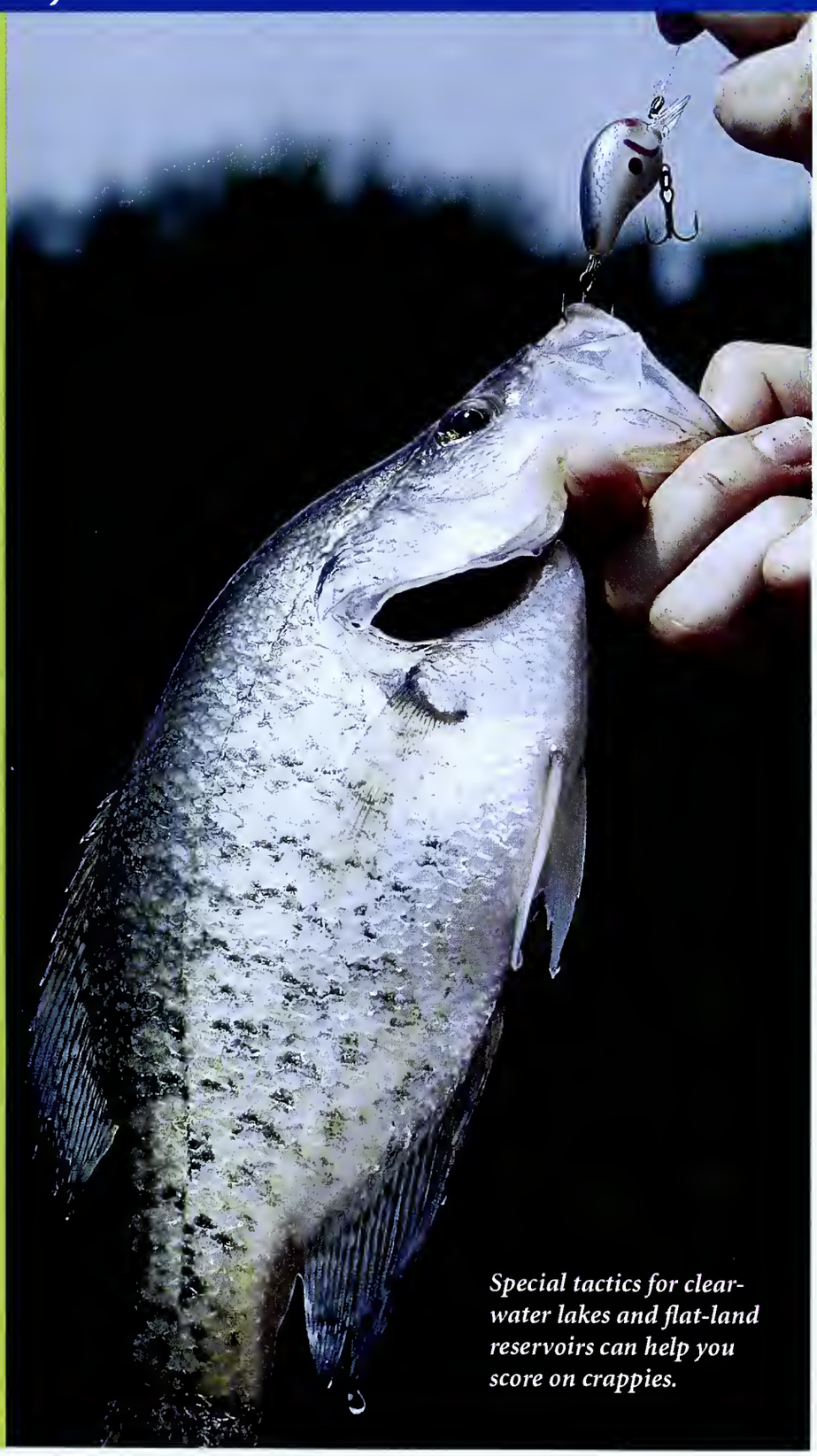
Juniata River Water Trails

The Juniata River Water Trail's upper and lower sections include a total of 80 miles from Canoe Creek State Park to Lewistown. The Raystown Branch Juniata River Water Trail encompasses 60 miles from Bedford to Saxton. Visit the Commission's water trail pages for information on these water trails, and other Pennsylvania water trails, that you can view, print or download. Enter this web address into your browser: **http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/watertrails/trailindex.htm#19**.

Crazy for SUMMERTIME Crappies

by Darl Black

photos by the author



Special tactics for clear-water lakes and flat-land reservoirs can help you score on crappies.

Summertime crappie fishing is a vacation of sorts from trying to catch more fickle species like trout, walleyes or muskies.

Summertime crappies do not inhabit the same locations they did during the spring. Once the spawn is complete, crappies relocate from protected shallows to sites where there is a plentiful supply of their favorite food—either minnows or young-of-year gizzard shad. When they establish a feeding area, crappies typically become reliable residents for the balance of the summer.

There are certain types of lakes, however, where I cannot consistently locate crappies through the summer. Therefore, I choose my waters carefully, preferring two distinctively different scenarios.

One option is a clear-water natural lake with thick weedbeds which feature defined deep edges. Several of these are found in northwest Pennsylvania, with Conneaut Lake the largest and probably best known. Here summertime crappies may be found at depths from roughly 8 feet to as deep as 18 feet.

On a natural lake, a crappie school usually stakes out a section of weedline—typically a sharp turn. Under favorable feeding conditions (hazy sun or cloudy conditions), crappies spread out along the weedline. Some may move outward along points, while others move shallower to chase minnows over submerged weeds. But during blue-sky high pressure, crappies generally stay tucked into an inside turn of the deep weedline.

Mid-lake humps that rise close enough to the surface to support

solid weed growth also draw crappie schools on natural lakes.

Scenario two involves flat-land reservoirs which have large moderately sloping flats leading to defined drop-offs or creek channel lips at fishable depths.

Water color on these lakes ranges from slightly dingy (or algae stained) to very dingy. The dingier impoundments will be void of vegetation. But moderately clear lakes may have shallow weeds—perhaps very thick vegetation in some areas. However, these reservoirs do not support uniform weedbeds extending across the flats to deeper water; therefore the weed edge in this type of impoundment is rarely home to summer crappie schools.

But these are man-made lakes, so congregations of stumps can be usually found at key depths. These reservoirs are typically dotted with hundreds of man-made brushpiles or crib structures. My favorite impoundments are Pymatuning Lake, Shenango Lake, Lake Wilhelm and Lake Arthur.

On these reservoirs, focus efforts on stump rows, brushpiles or crappie cribs located on points, moderately tapering flats, drop-offs or creek channel lips at depths from roughly 7 or 8 feet to 16 feet. If the water color is particularly dingy and there is a gizzard shad population, it's also a good idea to check the shallower water cover in main lake areas (as opposed to cover in cuts, coves, small bays and backwaters).

In keeping with a simple summertime crappie-fishing philosophy, I employ only a handful of lure presentations. Depending on the lake, I may: (1) countdown and swim a small jig; (2) dip shallow cover with a jig on a long rod; or (3) troll a small crankbait.

Counting down a jig. Casting a jig is a universal presentation, used effectively for fishing weedlines, sporadic weed clumps and deep, submerged wood cover.

I like a 2" to 3" soft-plastic body on a 1/16- to 3/16-ounce leadhead. Although you may choose to use a tube or curly-tail body, I prefer one with a swim-tail because the tail vibrates during the retrieve, imparting a gentle shimmy to the entire bait. Some of these soft-plastic lures with boot-shaped tails look remarkably like little shad, while others have a slender worm-like body.

For fishing around weedbeds in natural lakes, I'll choose a specific jighead and body shape that allows for the Tex-posed skin-hooked style of rigging. This greatly reduces the likelihood of snagging strands of weeds because the hook point is protected. But when targeting underwater stumps and brushpiles, I generally fish the hook point exposed to ensure better hook-ups with light-biting crappies.

I use a 6- to 7-foot light-power rod with a moderately fast tip. The spinning reel will be spooled with 4- or 6-pound test monofilament. Mono performs better than fluorocarbon line when casting small jigs.

For deep weedlines, I position the boat so I can cast parallel to the edge. After the cast, I give the jig a four-count before beginning the initial retrieve. On each succeeding cast, I'll drop the jig another two-count on the weed wall before retrieving slowly.

For submerged wood in a reservoir, I first identify the precise location of the cover with the depthfinder and drop a buoy marker slightly beyond the site. Using the depth reading from the sonar, cast beyond the target and count the jig down to the level of the cover. Slowly swim the jig back to the boat, trying to maintain the depth so it just skims the top of the cover.

Dipping shallow cover. On dingy water reservoirs which have a gizzard shad population, crappies may be found in surprisingly shallow water during the summer. Sometimes the water depth may only be 2 or 3 feet.

The reason crappies are there is simple: They are waiting for their dinner. Filter-feeding young-of-the-year shad schools often roam shallow water. If stumps, partially submerged logs, pole timber or brushpiles are found on the flats that shad routinely travel, you can expect to find crappies holding on shallow cover waiting for their meal to swim by.

I use a 9-foot rod specifically designed for "dipping" a 1/16- to 3/16-ounce jig beside visible cover. The rod features a sensitive tip but a firm lower section that does not bend when lifting a crappie out of cover. I keep abrasion resistant 8-pound test monofilament on the reel. The leadhead is dressed with either a 2-inch tube body or a beaver-tail grub.

The dipping technique is simply reaching the rod over the cover, lowering the jig into the water and swimming it slowly around the cover. When a hit occurs, lift the rod tip straight up and swing the crappie aboard.

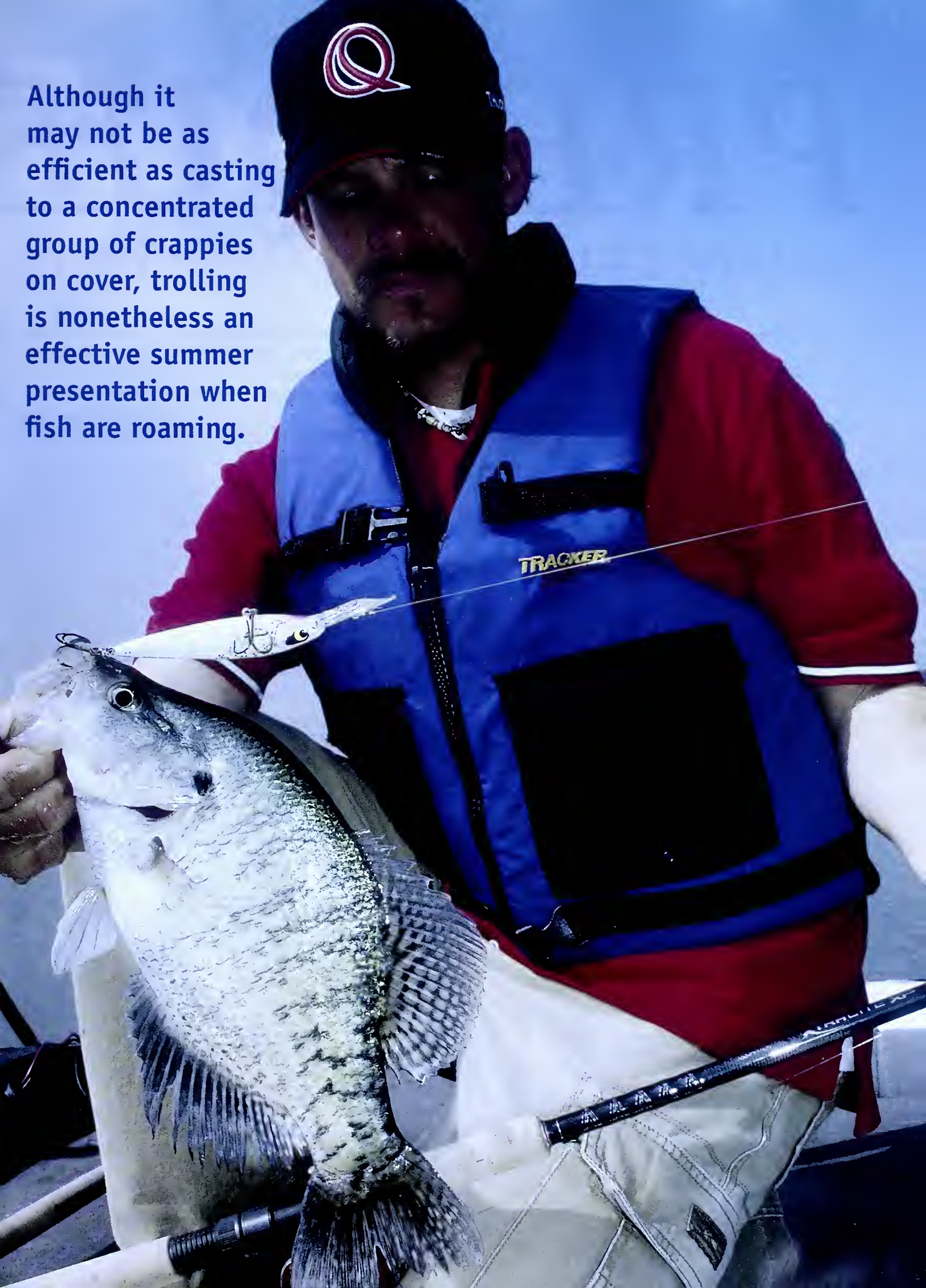
Trolling crankbaits. On reservoirs, do not overlook featureless shoreline flats leading to a creek or river channel. Young shad transverse these seemingly barren flats. In turn, crappies may be shadowing the shad.

Because cover is absent and the fish schools are constantly moving, there are no targets to cast to. The best approach is to troll a crankbait. Trolling with the electric motor is less likely to spook shallow baitfish and crappies than running the outboard.

Select several shad-shaped diving baits with a 3- to 4-inch body length. Have ones with slightly different running depths in order to cover depths from about 4 feet to perhaps 10 feet. But you do not want the bait ticking bottom, but swimming free.

This is not precise structure trolling. It is simply randomly pulling plugs on a long line to intersect fairly shallow crappie schools. Put the electric in a slow forward speed, make a long cast over the transom and pull extra line off the spool before you engage the reel. Troll in a large "S" pattern, making each pass a little closer to the channel lip or drop-off, changing to a deeper-running crankbait as needed.

Although it may not be as efficient as casting to a concentrated group of crappies on cover, trolling is nonetheless an effective summer presentation when fish are roaming.



Although it may not be as efficient as casting to a concentrated group of crappies on cover, trolling is nonetheless an effective summer presentation when fish are roaming.

PRESQUE

For family fishing fun in northwest PA, look no further than Presque Isle State Park in Erie. Presque Isle offers impressive pond fishing, deep-water angling and pier fishing that the entire family can enjoy.



North Pier

The bay, located between the peninsula's southern shore and the city of Erie, provides great fishing on protected water. Nearly the entire length of Presque Isle State Park allows for excellent shore fishing. The shoals and rocky bottom terrain along the bay's northern shore attract numbers of fish as well as the weed beds that are great for wading for bass. The shoreline surrounding the ferry slip is also a popular spot for anglers who enjoy fly-fishing. Perch are arguably the most popular bay fish, but bass, northern pike, steelhead, burbot and crappies are also caught regularly. If you're targeting trophy-sized walleyes or salmon, you'll have to venture away from Presque Isle and into Lake Erie's deeper waters.

Ponds, lagoons

Pond fishing is also popular for families. The East and West Waterworks ponds offer terrific fishing for youthful anglers since you can typically pull panfish such as bluegills and perch from the shallow waters. After recent renovations, Waterworks now boasts an impressive fishing platform. It's an ideal location for family picnics with its beach, restrooms, a playground and picnic pavilions. The Ferry Slip, adjacent to Waterworks Park, is also a popular nearby fishing pier.

If you are in search of a tranquil and relaxed fishing trip for the family, the

ISLE

FOR FAMILY FISHING ADVENTURES

by Kelly Houghton

lagoons at Presque Isle will surely meet your needs. The lagoons are located directly west of Misery Bay and Perry's Monument. Anglers fishing from rowboats and canoes commonly catch panfish, bass and northern pike in the lagoon's picturesque waters.

Horseshoe Pond, on the peninsula's southernmost tip near the Coast Guard station, is scattered with old-time boathouses. It's a popular fishing location for kids and those desiring reserved, protected fishing. The water depth of about 6 feet provides great habitat for panfish such as crappies, bluegills, perch and large carp.



South Pier

The piers

The peninsula's most popular fishing locations may be its trademark piers. Presque Isle Bay connects with Lake Erie through a channel that is nearly 30 feet deep. You can easily reach the North Pier from the tip of the peninsula near the Coast Guard station. The South Pier, accessible from Bayfront Parkway near Lampe Marina in downtown Erie, forms the adjacent side of the channel. Since the South Pier is not affiliated with Presque Isle State Park, anglers can participate in night fishing, while the North Pier opens at dawn and closes at dusk. However, recognize that during summer weekends the bay can be crowded with boats and the channels may have a lot of boat traffic, producing rough water.

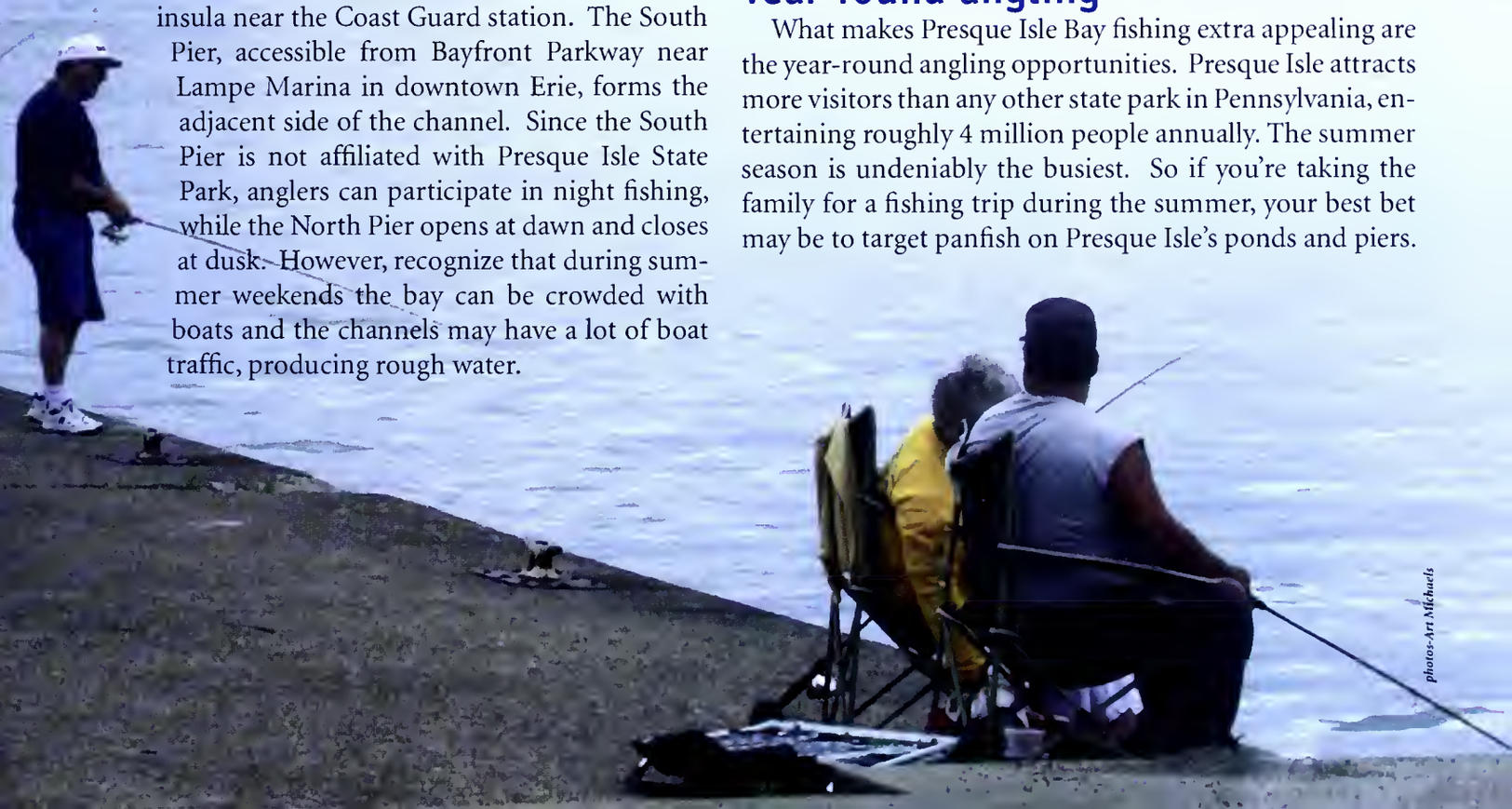
Fishing from a boat

Popular spots for boat anglers include Misery Bay, Marina Lake, Horseshoe Pond and the area from Perry's Monument to the channel.

Since the bay is generally calm or has only small waves, practically any boat can be taken on at least some part of the water. The only motor restriction occurs in the lagoons, where only electric-powered and unpowered boats are permitted. Although the bay can have its share of waves, conditions are generally calm and accommodating to most watercraft. Misery Bay, Horseshoe Pond, Marina Lake and the lagoons are the most sheltered fishing spots and often remain calm even when the winds elsewhere are strong.

Year-round angling

What makes Presque Isle Bay fishing extra appealing are the year-round angling opportunities. Presque Isle attracts more visitors than any other state park in Pennsylvania, entertaining roughly 4 million people annually. The summer season is undeniably the busiest. So if you're taking the family for a fishing trip during the summer, your best bet may be to target panfish on Presque Isle's ponds and piers.



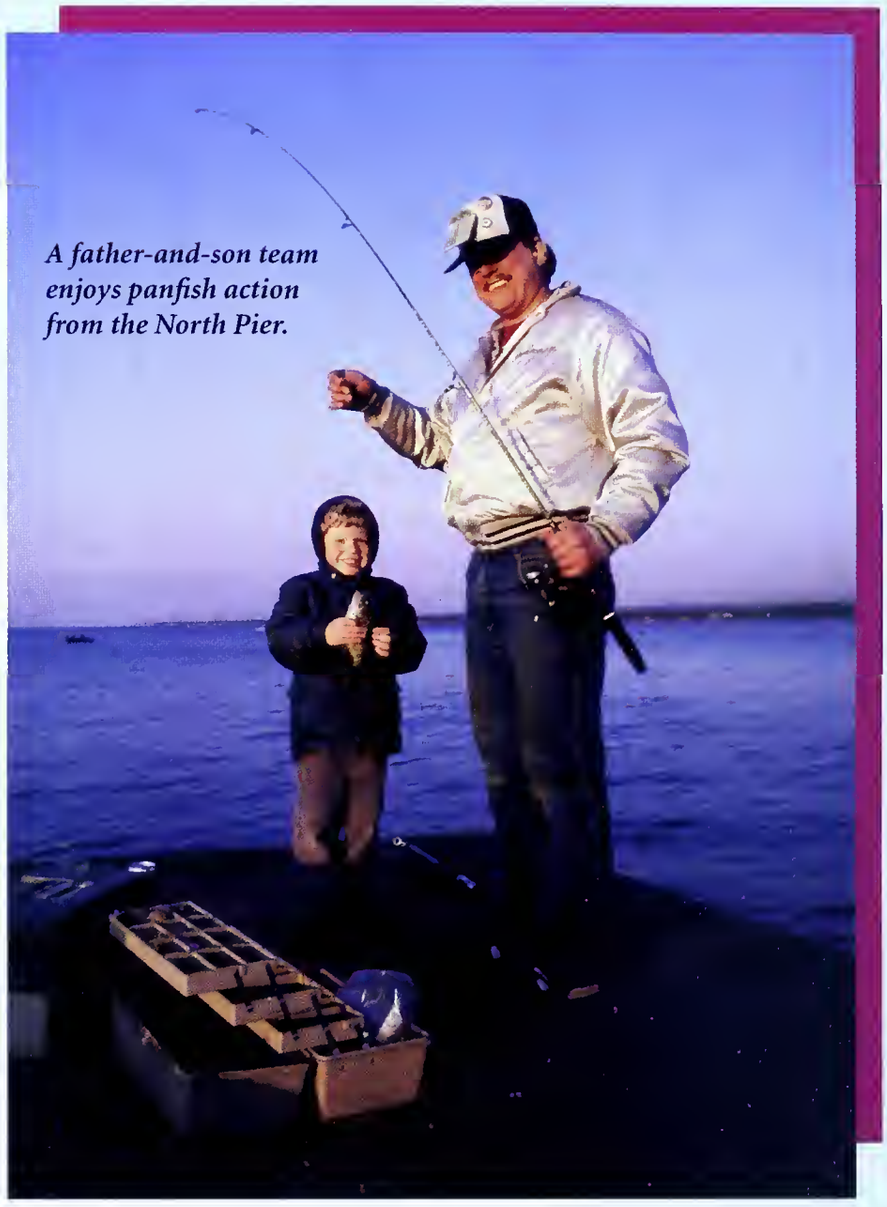
photos-Art Michaels

Weekend fishing on the bay tends to be crowded with speedboats and personal watercraft. Thus, bay fishing may be the best during the week and in the morning on holidays and weekends.

Spring and summer are the most popular times for bass fishing, each season with a different size and creel limit. Be sure to review your *Pennsylvania Fishing Summary* for details. Ample numbers of both largemouth and smallmouth bass can be caught. If you're fishing in late fall, muskies can be found throughout the bay, particularly on cool and overcast days. Trolling through the bay is the most common approach for anglers targeting muskies. Ice fishing opportunities are also plentiful. The head of the bay, Horseshoe Pond and Misery Bay are the most popular ice-fishing sites.

Consider a few secrets to help your kids reel in a great catch. The S.O.N.S. of Lake Erie has sunk about 180 "cribs," fish-habitat structures, in various bay locations. Cribs have been installed in the northeast corner of Misery Bay, about a quarter-mile west of the Marina Lake channel, inside Marina Lake, and behind the ranger station about 150 feet from shore. More cribs are planned for the future.

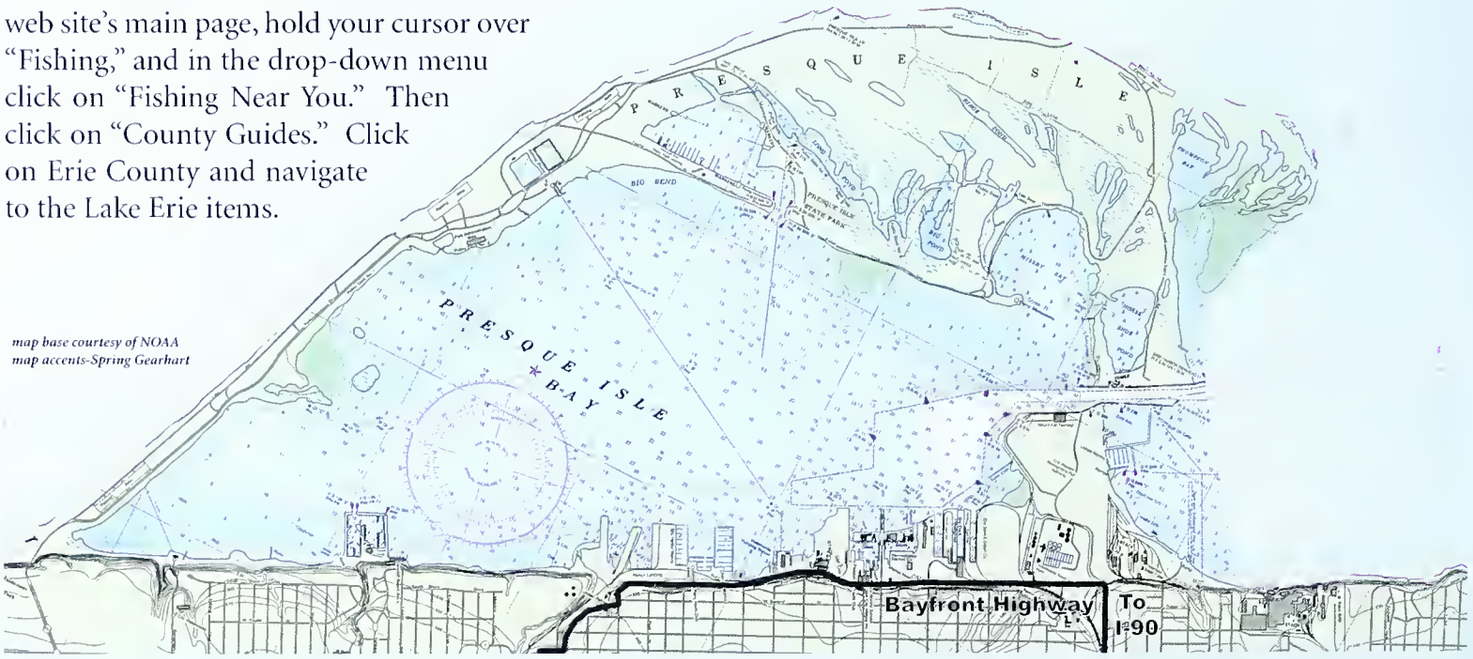
Whether your family enjoys casting lures from a boat, wading along the shores for bass, dropping a line from a pier for perch or crappies, or fishing secluded in a tranquil lagoon, Presque Isle State Park can present the entire family with an unforgettable day on the water.



A father-and-son team enjoys panfish action from the North Pier.

For More Information

Visit the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us, for more information on fishing in Presque Isle Bay and in Lake Erie. On the left side of the Commission web site's main page, hold your cursor over "Fishing," and in the drop-down menu click on "Fishing Near You." Then click on "County Guides." Click on Erie County and navigate to the Lake Erie items.



map base courtesy of NOAA
map accents-Spring Gearhart



Look for near-shore walleye action on Lake Erie in spring and early summer.

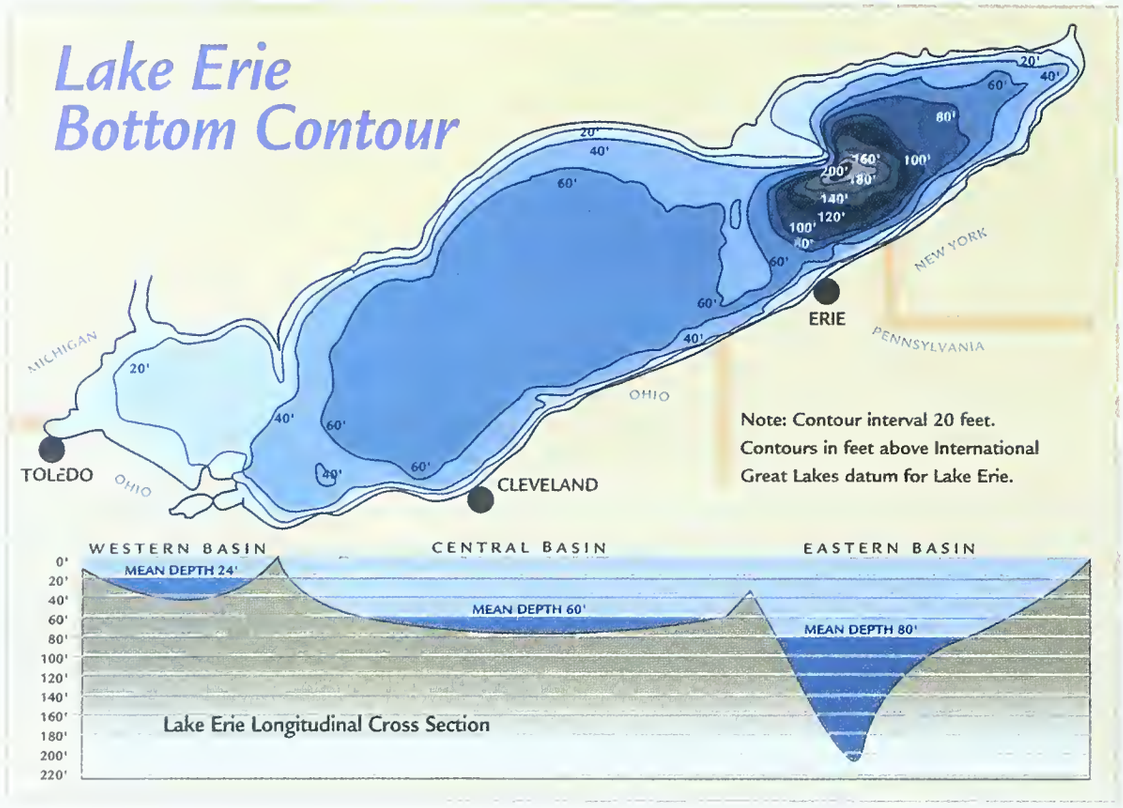
by Jeff Knapp
photos by the author

NOW FOR ERIE'S NEAR-SHORE WALLEYES

Fueled by both a high population of 3-year-old fish and cool water temperatures, last summer's Lake Erie walleye anglers enjoyed phenomenal near-shore fishing, sport that extended well into the season. Given last year's outstanding sport, expectations are high for this summer.

On Pennsylvania's portion of Lake Erie, typical near-shore walleye action is limited to the spring and early summer. At this time anglers find walleyes in relatively shallow water, and they catch them within the first 2 to 3 miles of shore. As the water warms, both baitfish and walleyes tend to move gradually farther offshore. When concentrations of walleyes move into Pennsylvania waters from the west by way of the annual west-to-east migration (mid-summer), Erie walleye anglers must often venture offshore to find fish.

Younger walleyes seem to have an inclination to stay closer to shore. The year 2003 was a banner year for walleye production. Fish hatched that year will help drive the walleye fishery for years to come. A year ago the 3-year-olds ran from about 15 to 19 inches. By late summer mostly all fish from this year class were much bigger than the 15-inch minimum length limit, an indication of the quick growth rate in Erie's forage-rich waters.



map graphic-Ted Walke

Despite the harvests last season, fisheries managers expect there to be plenty of 2004 walleyes remaining this season. With another year of growing under their golden-olive belts, the 4-year-olds will be bigger than 20 inches this summer. If water temperatures remain cool—in the low to mid-70s—there's a good chance you'll be able to catch walleyes this summer without going halfway to the Canadian border.

Like many Pennsylvania anglers, last summer I made several sojourns to Lake Erie to take advantage of the fine walleye action. My efforts took place in the western portions of our state's waters, not far from the Pennsylvania/Ohio border. But good action was reported in many areas of Erie, all the way east to the New York border. When it comes to Lake Erie, regardless of the species I'm after, I'm the definitive fair-weather fisherman. If the weather isn't stable and the wave forecast is for wave heights of two feet or more, I'm not making the two-hour drive north to the lake. So being able to catch Erie walleyes close to the dock is fine with me.

Structure

What exactly is "near-shore"? Along Pennsylvania's shores there are subtle (and not so subtle) structures that break from about 25 feet out to over 40 feet. This breakline occurs within 3 miles of shore. Find structure that breaks quickly from shallow to deep, and there's a good chance the general area will hold walleyes. Remember that things are much bigger on Lake Erie. A structure can extend for a mile or more, with a distinct breakline that runs parallel to shore. While scattered walleyes can be found over areas with less of a pronounced break, the fish tend to concentrate around areas with a quicker drop.

This isn't to imply that walleyes hang directly over dropoffs—only that they seem to relate loosely to them. I've found walleyes up on the shallow side of the flat in 25 feet of water. Then there are days when they're well off the structure's deep side in over 40 feet of water. Finding significant breaklines, however, is a starting point in locating near-shore Erie walleyes.

Since Erie walleyes usually suspend off the bottom, it's easy to spot them with a sonar unit. As with computers, the speed at which modern sonar units process information has increased. It's now possible to scope out areas for walleyes without slowing down to trolling speed. Crank the processor and scroll speeds (ping speed and chart speed on my unit) up to the maximum. Walleye-sized fish will show up as short, fat arches. See these and you can slow down and take a better look.

Weather has much to do with how walleyes relate to Lake Erie's water column. In general, the more stable the weather, the higher in the water column the fish will congregate. Sunny weather and low waves draw plankton to the surface, and with it the rest of the food chain. Storms and cold fronts drive things deeper.



Lake Erie's walleyes suspend off the bottom. Locate them with your sonar unit.

Tactics

With the exception of spring, when walleyes are taken by shore anglers casting minnow baits, the vast majority of Lake Erie walleyes find their way into the ice chest by way of trolling. This is true of the near-shore fishery as well. But since the water is relatively shallow, it isn't necessary to use the gear needed to reach down 60 feet and beyond, so things are a bit easier.

Gear

Fishing for Lake Erie walleyes requires proper gear. Your boat needs to be equipped with rod holders and you need several trolling outfits with level-wind reels. Line counters on the reels make the trolling much more accurate. If you plan on using a leadcore rod, be sure the reel is a large-capacity one capable of holding the bulky line.

A GPS unit with a mapping feature allows you to see where you have fished. You can effectively work the water and go back over productive areas. Units that accept electronic mapping cards provide a detailed background map, adding even more precision to your efforts.

Be sure to carry the added safety items needed to keep you safe and legal on Lake Erie. Review the list of required and recommended safety items for your boat in the *Pennsylvania Boating Handbook*. View, download or print this information on the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us. On the main page's left side, hold your cursor over "Regulations & Laws," and in the drop-down menu click on "Boating." Then click on "*PA Boating Handbook*," the first item.—*JK*.

The workhorse for most summertime Erie walleye trollers is a flutterspoon fished behind a directional planer/diver. To attain the depths commonly needed to reach fish offshore, it's necessary to use the large version; while the big one can be used tighter to shore, you can drop down to a medium size, which is more pleasant to work with. At the 0 setting (straight back, not planing to the side), the medium diver pulls down to 34 feet with 125 feet of 10-pound-test mono out. This depth decreases as you adjust the diver to plane to the side.

My trolling reels are loaded with 30-pound-test braided superline that has the diameter of 8-pound-test mono. Offerings dive a bit deeper with this thin line. These lines have no stretch, though, so it's necessary to use softer rods for a bit of forgiveness.

Fluorocarbon line is good for leader work (between the diver and the lure). The leader should be about 6 to 8 feet long, but certainly not so long that it impedes your winding the fish in close enough to be netted. Use line of at least 16- to 17-pound test to prevent breakoffs when the fish hits.

Flutterspoons in the 4-inch category work fine. Carry a selection of colors and finishes. Last season, brass spoons that included some chartreuse produced well.

As effective as divers and spoons are, in most near-shore situations it's possible and simpler to troll deep-diving crankbaits by longlining, or to use leadcore line to sink minnow baits down to walleye levels.

Last season the majority of the walleyes I put in my boat came on a deep-diving crankbait in either purpledescent or blue flash. Fished about 100 feet behind the boat on 30/8 braided superline, the lure dived to the 30-foot range. An 8-foot fluorocarbon leader connected the main line to the lure.

Staying with my philosophy of keeping things simple, I run one crankbait out each side of the boat, varying the set-back. I start things off, say, at 80 feet and 110 feet to strain different areas of the water column. My trolling rods are long (10.5 feet), so I usually don't find it necessary to use inline planers to catch fish. The long rods hold the baits a bit farther away from the boat and they separate them, which minimizes tangles.

Off the stern goes a leadcore rod with a minnow bait. Blue/chrome and blue/silver are typically hot colors. I usually start off with about 100 feet of leadcore line out. If the lure remains untouched, I lengthen the let-out, which allows the lure to run deeper. If it is a bit bumpy on the water, I troll with the wind to my back.

During the summer, trolling speeds of 2.0 to 2.5 mph tend to be most effective for catching Lake Erie walleyes. Whether you are using hardbaits or spoons, if you are catching a lot of drum (sheepshead) you can often minimize tempting them by switching colors.

Even when walleyes are close to shore, if you're looking for big walleyes, the odds favor the big-boat angler geared to fishing offshore. But for the smaller-boat angler who's willing to wait for stable conditions, the time could be right for another excellent near-shore walleye bite.

Conditions can change quickly on Lake Erie, so always wear your life jacket and make sure everyone aboard your boat wears a life jacket.



Spoons and medium divers are the workhorses for walleye trolling.

More on Walleyes

"The 'Eyes Have It" is the title of the Commission's web pages dedicated to walleyes and saugeyes. The pages feature a wealth of information on these species including stocking information, fisheries management overviews, regulations, biologist reports, listing of PA waters with walleyes and saugeyes, walleye fishing tips, links to related topics, and selected articles from the pages of previous *PA Angler & Boater* magazine issues. You can view, download or print any of these items. To reach these pages, enter this address into your browser: http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/walleye.htm.—*JK*.

CHOOSING Guides & Charters FOR FAMILY FISHING

by Marcus Schneck

We'd been fishing with the same captain and his boat for years, so long that we had gone through the purchase of a new boat right along with him. Two or three times a year we'd book fishing trips with him.

However, over the years things were changing. As more and more captains were plying the same waters, trying to keep an ever-increasing client group happy from the same resource base, our captain was finding it tougher and tougher to come up with what he felt was an adequate day's worth of action.

What we then called "the energy crisis" hit and our captain felt even more pressured by his chosen career. He took to long periods of drifting in hopes of crossing fish, instead of burning fuel to run the engines to put his clients over fish and then keep them there.

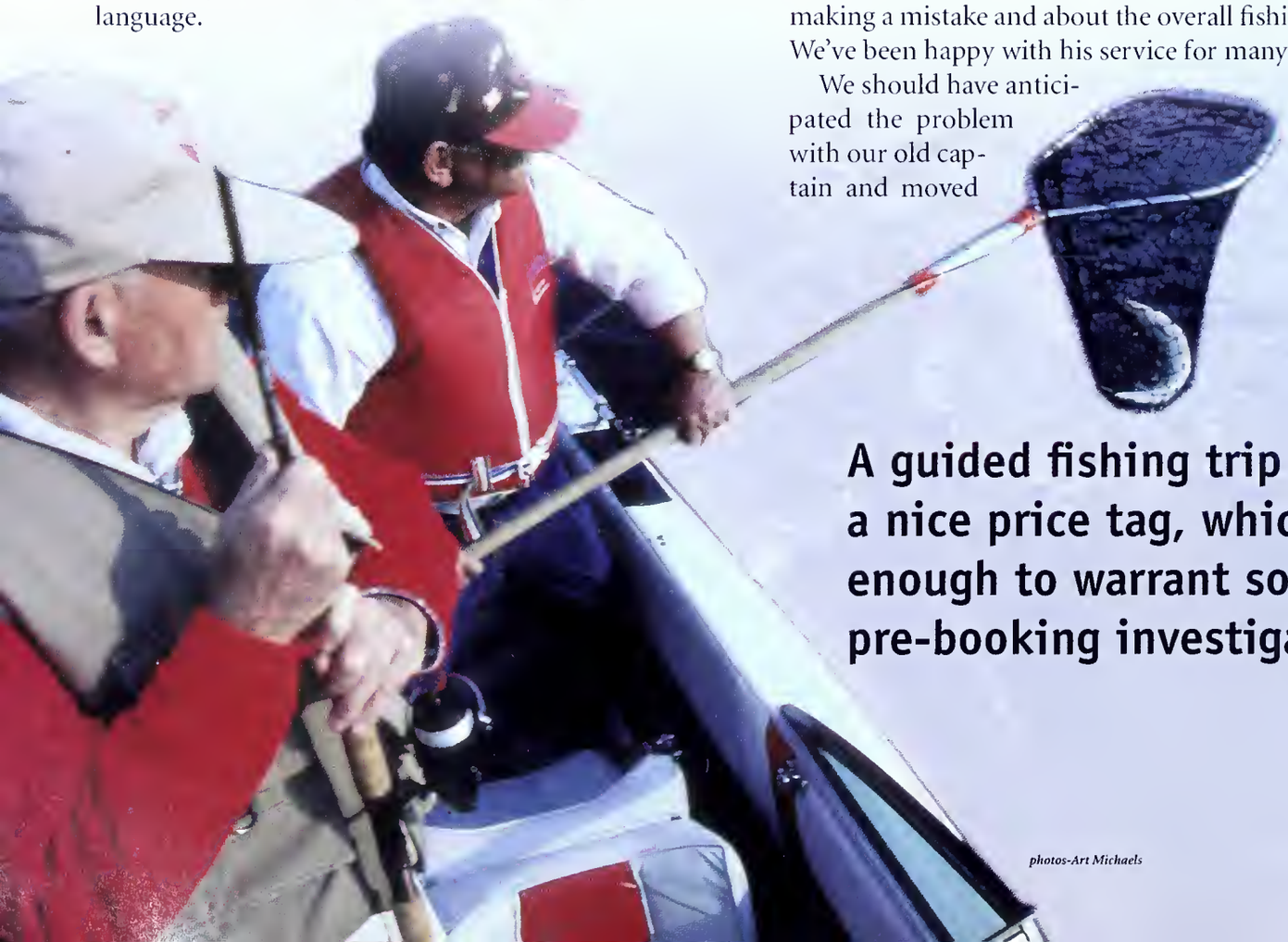
In his final years of frustration, at least the final few years of our association with him, the captain developed a tendency toward long rants liberally peppered with foul language.

Even after he began complaining about any of us who wore what he considered the wrong kind of shoes on his boat, we might have continued with him for a few more years, had that not been the same time when we were starting to take the kids along on the boat.

Our decision was decided for us when he "laid into" one of the kids, who had become sick and emptied his stomach into the boat's head. After he reduced the 9-year-old to tears, we told him to take us in, and we were done for the day. As it turned out, we were done with him for good.

That was before the Internet was the ultimate, instant answer for all our questions in our homes, offices, cars and phones. We had to conduct our search for a new captain the old-fashioned way, on the phone, face to face, asking friends and acquaintances for their recommendations. The search paid off, and we found a new captain, working pretty much the same area of water, but with a completely new attitude, both about kids being kids and occasionally making a mistake and about the overall fishing experience. We've been happy with his service for many years.

We should have anticipated the problem with our old captain and moved



A guided fishing trip carries a nice price tag, which is enough to warrant some pre-booking investigation.

photos-Art Michaels

on the first time we wanted to take the kids along. A guided fishing trip carries a nice price tag, which is enough to warrant some pre-booking investigation. However, even more important when taking the kids along is avoiding a bad experience that could sour them to fishing.

The explosion of the Internet has made the search infinitely easier, but the questions remain the same.

Start with a few captains or guides that serve the area you want to fish with your family. Visit the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**, and search the "Permitted Pennsylvania Charter Boats & Fishing Guides" page. This relatively new Commission program requires guides and charter boat captains to earn a permit to conduct a guiding and or charter business. Permitting offers clients a higher measure of professionalism, including a captain's earning a Commission Boating Safety Education Certificate or U.S. Coast Guard licensing, certification in CPR, and meeting certain insurance requirements.

Enter this address into your web browser: **http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/chboat.htm**. Here you can search for permitted charters and guides by county, business name or guide name.

Check out their web sites, if they have one. Do they describe themselves as family-friendly or oriented toward families? If they do, what information do they offer to support those claims? Do any of the "hero" photos on their web sites show kids or families proudly holding up their catches? In those photos, do the kids really look happy?

Talk to the captains or guides about the family fishing trip you have in mind. Ask enough questions to get a true reading on how they feel about working with kids on a stream or on their boats. Watch for any acknowledgement by them of the shorter attention spans of kids and the fact that kids may need extra pit stops during the trip. Not being kid- or family-friendly isn't wrong, but it just isn't right for those looking to book a family trip. Pay attention to any red flags that you feel going up during the conversation, if you can identify their causes or not, and follow up on them with additional questions.



Do any of the "hero" photos on their web sites show kids or families proudly holding up their catches? In those photos, do the kids really look happy?

On the web sites, look for former clients that the captains or guides have offered as references and testimonials. Don't rely solely on their comments as offered on the web sites. Ask the captains or guides for their email addresses or telephone numbers and make contact with them.

Be forthright with the captains or guides. Tell them you are looking for references about family fishing trips. They can't supply you with the exact type of references you want if they don't know your exact needs and interests.

Talk to former clients. Tell them about the trip you are hoping to experience with your family. Ask about their trips, specifically the aspects of those trips that related to the kids. Did the captain or guide go out of his or her way in any way to make the trip special for the kids? How well did he or she relate to the kids? Did he or she work with the skill levels the kids brought to the trip? Was the equipment supplied appropriate for the kids?

Returning to the Internet, search the name of the captains or guides for any chat room or similar electronic discussions that have made reference to them. Remember that the Internet tends to pull out the most negative and derogatory comments because of the anonymity it affords anyone wanting to criticize another person. However, if more than one negative comment of a like nature surfaces about any one captain or guide, it may be a red flag that warrants further investigation.

After you've chosen the captain or guide for your outing and are booking the trip, get the exact time and place he or she wants you for the launch or meeting place; specific directions to that place that you are certain you understand completely; details on which equipment, gear, lures and such you are expected to bring along and which he will be supplying; details on food and drinks that will be needed; and details of the skills it would be helpful for the kids to master before the trip.

On the day of the trip, make sure everyone has used a restroom immediately before arriving. Make sure that your camera is equipped with fresh batteries and fresh film or a memory card with adequate space. Extra batteries are never a bad idea.

Arrive at the designated meeting place early, not just on time, but early enough to be noticeable. Offer to help the captain or guide with any preparations for the trip, such as carrying items to the boat, and to the level of their abilities get the kids involved in helping. Encourage the kids to listen carefully to any instructions the guide wants to provide before embarking and throughout the day.

And that's about what you can do in advance. As you begin your adventure on the water, it's time for some well-earned enjoyment.

REFLECTING ON THE WATER

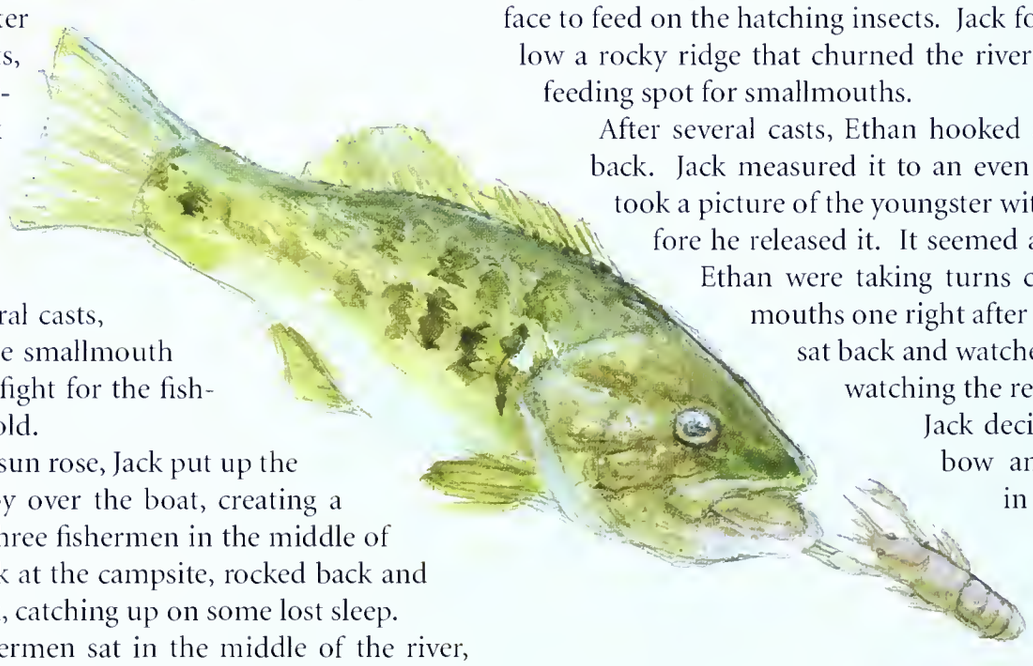
Ready to go

by Ron Kuhn

illustrations by the author

Jack sipped black coffee from his chipped blue granite coffee mug as several small birds chirped in the early morning light. Several great blue herons passed overhead as Jack added a small piece of red oak to the campfire. As the strips of bacon began to sizzle, Jack could hear the sound of a two-stroke motor as it pushed a bass boat carrying two bass fishermen. After three or so boats went past, Beth awoke, got dressed and unzipped the tent. "Good morning," she whispered to Jack as he motioned toward the cup of coffee he poured for her. The couple sat beside the small fire drinking their coffee as Jack cooked eggs and made toast. Ethan and his cousin Wyatt made their way out of the tent as Jack scooped the eggs out of the skillet.

After breakfast, they gathered their gear and headed down to the john boat. Jack motored upriver past the other boats to a section that seemed like a good place to hook into some smallmouth bass. Ethan and Wyatt began casting their medium-sized crayfish plugs toward the grasses at the water's edge. After several dozen casts, the boys caught several nice-sized rock bass but no smallmouths. Jack convinced them to try a deeper-diving plug, and after several casts, Wyatt hooked a nice smallmouth that put up a good fight for the fishing rod of a 7-year-old.



As the afternoon sun rose, Jack put up the khaki canvas canopy over the boat, creating a shady spot for the three fishermen in the middle of the river. Beth, back at the campsite, rocked back and forth in a hammock, catching up on some lost sleep.

As the three fishermen sat in the middle of the river, Jack told the boys stories about his uncle Walter who had fought in the South Pacific in World War II. When he came home, he purchased an old wooden boat for water skiing and fishing.

"Uncle Walter used to love fishing for bass and eels. Most of all he liked motoring around in the *Heather Marie*." Wyatt was puzzled: "What is the *Heather Marie*?" Jack snickered. "The *Heather Marie* was the mahogany boat he used for fishing. Heather was his wife's name. Boats are usually named after a girlfriend or a wife," he said.

The boys looked downriver as a groundhog swam from the eastern shore toward the west. "What is that?" Ethan asked in amazement. "Just a groundhog out for a swim," Jack said. As they watched the small rodent shake off on the bank, Jack decided to head back toward camp.

Beth had peppers and onions cooking on the fire when they reached camp. "Any luck?" Beth asked. "We caught our share of rock bass, not too many smallies, though. We'll try again toward dusk."

The boys cooked hotdogs and sausages while the beans bubbled in the cast iron skillet.

The Susquehanna flowed past the campground as the family ate dinner. Small insect hatches rose off the water as the evening light cast long shadows across the islands out in the river.

Nothing beats a sunny evening on the Susquehanna in the middle of summer, Jack thought to himself. As their boat traveled upstream, smaller fish broke the water's surface to feed on the hatching insects. Jack found a spot below a rocky ridge that churned the river into a natural feeding spot for smallmouths.

After several casts, Ethan hooked a nice bronzeback. Jack measured it to an even 16 inches and took a picture of the youngster with his catch before he released it. It seemed as if Wyatt and Ethan were taking turns catching smallmouths one right after the other. Jack sat back and watched. He enjoyed watching the red evening sky.

Jack decided to put the bow and stern lights in their places to light up the boat for the return trip to camp as the boys continued to fish. As their boat drifted downstream toward camp, the boys fished and Jack watched for rocks and other debris. The boys listened as Jack explained about the rafts and other manmade boats that used to travel the Susquehanna, hauling cargo, goods and people downstream.

"Your great uncle Gene and I floated from Pine Creek down to Harrisburg one time. Of course, we used an aluminum canoe, so we made better time than we would have on a wooden raft."

As their boat slid into the muddy river bank, Wyatt threw the rope to Beth to pull them closer to dry land. Beth had the fire burning enough that you could see the glow farther out in the river. Huge dobsonflies flickered around their propane lantern as it cast shadows through the riverside campground's brush. The moon cast its own light down through the trees and over the river.

"Make sure you guys bring your clothes and shoes into the tent before we go to bed." Jack then noted that the forecast called for rain late in the night into morning. From their sleeping bags everyone listened to the occasional train that passed and the outboards of the fishermen going upriver to catch channel catfish.

Jack awoke early in the morning to the sound of rain pelting the nylon tent. Nothing better than rain on a tent or on a tin roof to sleep under, he thought to himself as he drifted back to sleep.

The next morning Jack awoke to the sound of white pine limbs crackling as Beth started the campfire. Today Beth would be taking the boys downriver to fish for bass while Jack worked on his mailing list and e-newsletters that would be going out to his tackle customers. Jack's rubber hellgrammite lures were selling well since he modeled the first one after some samples he took on the Juniata earlier in the season. He hoped to reach many more through his online sales as well as the many small Pennsylvania bait shops.



As Jack sat at the river's edge, he watched kayakers paddle upstream along the islands in their brightly colored vessels while he sketched ideas for future fishing lures. Beth and the boys fished until lunchtime. Then they decided to move to another river section.

As their boat slipped behind a unnamed island, Beth steered the boat with the electric trolling motor. Wyatt and Ethan looked over the boat's edge for rocks and watched as huge carp darted from the island's dense underbrush out into the safety of the river. When they rounded the side of the island, the boys cast toward the bank with minnow lures and watched as two bowfishermen drifted, looking for carp. Wyatt asked the two men in the other boat if they had any luck, and one of the men held up a large carp they had arrowed earlier. After the men drifted below the island, they started their jet motor and headed to the next island.

Beth motored the boat to the ramp as Jack backed the trailer down to meet them. Even though things seemed like they were easier back in the days of log rafts and canal boats, the modern convenience of cell phones helped to save time. With everything packed and the boat secure on its trailer, Jack drove out to PA Route 15 with plans to stop at the nearest restaurant for an early dinner before they headed the rest of the way home.

NORTHWEST PA'S SMALL LAKES, BIG BASS

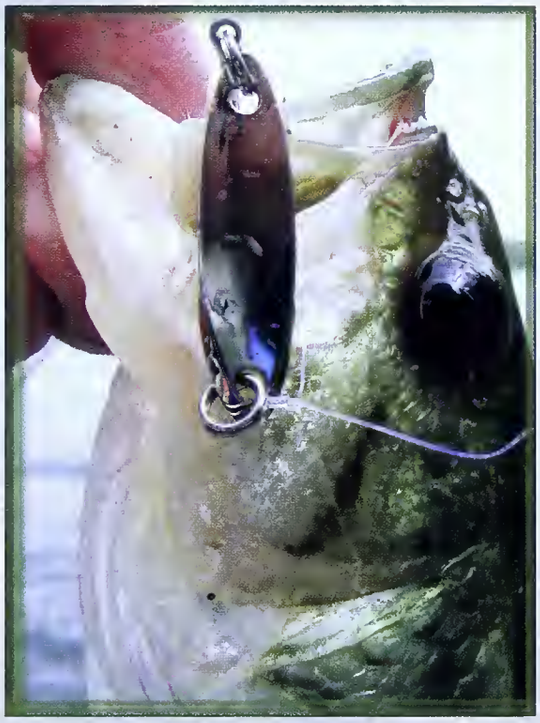
by Linda Steiner
photos by Linda and Bob Steiner

The northwest region is known for its sprawling lakes and impoundments, especially Pymatuning, Allegheny Reservoir (Kinzua), Lake Arthur, Shenango Lake and the granddaddy, Lake Erie. But smaller waterways can provide anglers with the experience of catching hefty bass. For suggestions we went to those who know best, the people who "fish" a lot.

"Fish" is in quotes because Commission Area 2 Fisheries Manager Al Woomer and Area 1 Fisheries Biologist Freeman Johns spend a lot of time in the company of the Northwest Region's biggest bass, but they don't use hook and line. Instead, they use lake sampling methods that include electrofishing and trapnetting (after which the fish are returned to the lake). Woomer's management "beat" includes the waters in the northwest region that drain into the Allegheny River. He was asked the most important question first: "If you were to recommend the best small lake in your area for anglers to catch big bass, what would that be?"

The answer, without hesitation: "Sugar Lake."

Sugar Lake, 90 acres, is a glacially formed lake in southern Crawford County, east of Meadville. The Commission has as access at Sugar Lake, and the lake has homes and cottages on the rural roads along two sides. The glacial "kettle" lake has a small wetland area near its outlet (Lake Creek), while a large wetlands complex extends up the valley from the lake. Access is at a Commission-owned launch area. Fishing at Sugar Lake is managed with Big Bass Program special regulations.



Sugar Lake, Crawford County, is one of the best northwest PA small-lake bass spots.

"This is the best lake in the northwest for bigger bass," says Woomer.

A natural lake that fits into its landscape, Sugar Lake averages about 10 feet deep and is nowhere twice that. Woomer describes Sugar Lake as having a good deal of shallow area along the shoreline, but deeper in the middle, a typical configuration for a glacier-formed "pothole" pond.

"The bass are toward the shallow areas and upper and lower lake, where the water comes in and goes out," he says.

Woomer says the lake's upper portion has large areas of lily pads, attractive places for anglers to plop their plugs or hair frogs. During fish-sampling, he'd sometimes find big bass around the boat docks and manmade structures.

"The bass aren't easy to catch at Sugar Lake, but when we conduct our surveys, we see a lot of real nice bass," says Woomer, "although the anglers wouldn't necessarily get them."

Where else should fishermen try for large bass from small, northwestern Pennsylvania lakes?



You don't absolutely have to have a big lake to grow big bass!

Howard Eaton Reservoir, says Woomer. This 250-acre lake is located near the border of New York and Pennsylvania in eastern Erie County, south of North East. The electric-motors or hand-power-only lake has Commission access areas on the western and eastern shores. It's a shallow lake with bays and aquatic vegetation.

"Eaton Reservoir has really evolved in its bass fishing," says Woomer. "First it was smallmouths, and now it is good for largemouths."

Just south is Lake Pleasant, at 60 acres, known mostly for its stocked trout, its clarity and its depth. Another glacial kettle lake, Lake Pleasant's largemouth fishery is around the edges, before the dropoff to deep water. Lake Pleasant has good "sequential vegetation," says Woomer, from deeply submerged to emergent.

"The largemouth bass population in Lake Pleasant has gone up and down, according to our surveys," says Woomer.

Lake Pleasant is southeast of Erie and west of Wattsburg. It has a Commission access for manually propelled boats only.

Also try 70-acre Lake LeBoeuf, says Woomer. "This is another good largemouth lake. There is a lot of [illegible] everywhere around the lake—a ton of habitat."

Lake LeBoeuf, at the edge Waterford, has a Commission access. Along the shoreline brush and around the island are the best places to try for bass, Woomer says.

Edinboro Lake, 250 acres, at the town of Edinboro, has unlimited-horsepower boating. Woomer says bass anglers should particularly ply the marshy upper end. Expect largemouths and smallmouths. The lake has three launch ramps.

Tamarack Lake, in Crawford County, touches the southeast outskirts of Meadville and is in the Big Bass Program. The lake is 562 acres, but is very shallow across its "waist." Anglers tend to launch at either end and stay in that section to fish, so it is like two smaller lakes.

Tamarack Lake is still coming back as a fishery since it was refilled in 2000 after work on its dams. Woomer says that since the restocking, "There may not be a lot of bass, but they are growing really well." This waterway is one to watch, as the special regulations, expanding food base and the length of time since stocking grow the bass.

Woodcock Creek Lake, 500 acres, is also in Crawford County and it, too, seems like two smaller lakes. The lake is pinched by a causeway about two-thirds of the way up the lake. The smaller end is a shallower, "no wake" zone. Woomer says upper Woodcock Creek Lake is more of a largemouth fishery than the lower portion. The lake, located northeast of Meadville, is a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers flood-control impoundment with public fishing and launching areas.

In Warren County, Chapman Lake, at the state park near Clarendon, is known for trout, but Woomer says electrofishing surveys there have found largemouth bass over 18 inches. The lake is just 68 acres, impounding the West Branch of Tionesta Creek.

Look for bass especially in the upper, shallower weedy end.

In Forest County, the surprising big bass fishery for a small lake is the larger pond at Buzzard Swamp, near Marienville, on Allegheny National Forest land. Here the wetlands and drainage of Muddy Fork are dotted with small impoundments. The largest, a 65-acre lake, is worth walking or bicycling to for bass. Canoes can also be carried or hand-wheeled the mile back on the gated access road/hiking trail.

Pennsylvania's biggest fish of 2000 included a largemouth bass from Buzzard Swamp. The fish was 26 inches long and weighed 9 pounds, 4 ounces. Anglers can try the smaller ponds there, but Woomer says "the big pond is far and away the best for bass."

Split by the border of Venango and Clarion counties, north of Emlenton, 250-acre Kahle Lake is also a good bass lake, says Woomer. "Just follow the shoreline around and fish," he says, but adds, "it's better along the bays." Kahle Lake is surveyed regularly by Commission biologists assisted by Clarion University students. During 2004, they found (and put back) bass of 5 and 6 pounds and over 20 inches. The lake is managed with Big Bass Program regulations. There are two boat ramps for launching electric-motor and hand-powered boats.

In Venango County, Justus Lake, north of Franklin and Oil City, is another small Big-Bass regulations lake that's often overlooked for its potential. At a bit less than 150 acres, it's the centerpiece of Two Mile Run County Park. Boat access is at the upper end, which has been increasing in weediness and decreasing in depth. A Commission survey in 2000 found that bass densities and the number of large bass had increased in just the two years since the lake had been placed under special regulations. Today, Woomer says, Justus Lake has "good numbers of bass and a few really big ones."

Area 1 Fisheries Biologist Freeman Johns manages the waters on the extreme western edge of northwestern Pennsylvania. Johns was asked the same question as Woomer: Where would you send an angler who wanted to catch a big bass from a small lake?

He, too, did not hesitate: "Lower Hereford Manor Lake."

Lower Hereford Manor Lake is in northern Beaver County near the Zelienople airport. An impoundment of about 45 acres, it's stocked with trout, but is managed with Big Bass regulations. There is good access both for electric-motor and hand-powered boats and for shore fishing.

Johns says the lake is "reasonably deep" (the dam is 37 feet high). The weeds grow out from shore for about 10 feet, and then there is a sharp edge to deeper water. Anglers should particularly work the dropoff, he says.

"Lower Hereford Manor Lake was put under Big Bass regulations in 1991, and when I think of what it has done, it's amazing," says Johns. "We have gotten [in our surveys] bass over 20 inches."

Johns says that when he first electrofished the lake in the early 1990s, he turned up only two bass over 15 inches. In 2006, his crew got 19 bass over 15 inches.

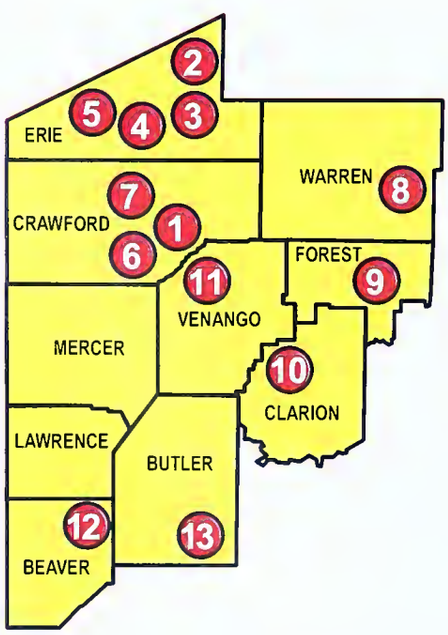
The majority of bass at Lower Hereford Manor Lake are now 14 to 16 inches, says Johns, but that doesn't mean anglers will get the big ones he sees in surveys. "The lake gets fished heavily and the fish are smart," he says.

Johns also recommends 52-acre Glade Run Lake, south of Butler, not far from the Butler/Allegheny County border. It, too, has responded well to Big Bass regulations, which have been in effect there for over 15 years. The size of the bass and the numbers keep going up, says Johns. In the 2004 survey, the Commission crew saw bass up to 22 inches.

Only electric-motor and hand-powered boats are permitted at Glade Run Lake, and there is a public launch ramp. Johns says that during the last survey, "We got two 'big boys' right at the ramp; we couldn't believe it!" He says that in this shallow lake with plentiful weed beds, the survey also found bass around the rocks and around "all the points."

Does it take a big lake to grow big bass? Not according to what Commission area fisheries managers are finding in the Northwest Region. Check out the photos from these lakes, of Woomer and Johns and their assistants, under the biologists reports, at the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**. Then go fishing!

Northwest PA's Small Lakes, Big Bass



1. Sugar Lake, Crawford Co.
2. Howard Eaton Res., Erie Co.
3. Lake Pleasant, Erie Co.
4. Lake LeBoeuf, Erie Co.
5. Edinboro Lake, Erie Co.
6. Tamarack Lake, Crawford Co.
7. Woodcock Creek Lake, Crawford Co.
8. Chapman Lake, Warren Co.
9. Buzzard Swamp, Forest Co.
10. Kahle Lake, Venango and Clarion Cos.
11. Justus Lake, Venango Co.
12. Lower Hereford Manor Lake, Beaver Co.
13. Glade Run Lake, Butler Co.

The Chartreuse Clouser Minnow

by Charles R. Meck
photos by the author


The Chartreuse Clouser Minnow

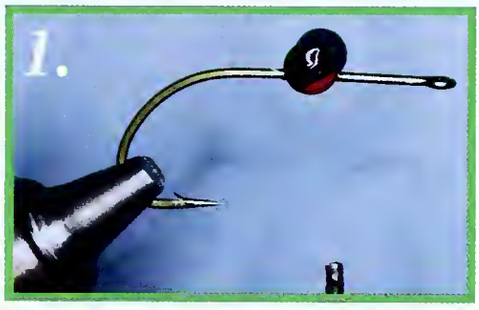
Ron McGraw is a retired adjunct math instructor for Penn State University. For the past six years when he wasn't teaching or tying, Ron's been fly-fishing for smallmouth bass. He's one of a small but growing number of top-notch fly-fishers who enjoy catching bass on a fly. He enjoys tying flies for bass almost as much as he likes fishing for them. One of his favorite flies is the Chartreuse Clouser Minnow. This pattern has been a consistent bass fly for him during the past few years.

Unlike many other patterns, the Chartreuse Clouser Minnow is an easy 2- or 3-minute tie. In spite of its simplicity, this pattern is one of the top flies you can use. It is a consistent bass fly for the entire season. The fly consists of 5/32 or 6/32 lead eyes, chartreuse bucktail, white bucktail and silver Krystal Flash. Ron uses 6/0 monofilament thread and finishes the pattern with epoxy cement to form a smooth, round head. Ron makes the Krystal Flash long (about 5 inches), and then cuts it to about 4 inches when he's completed the fly. He uses white and chartreuse bucktail each about the size of a wooden matchstick and extends them well past the bend. In most instances the bucktail is 4 or 5 inches long. Ron says that it's critical to have the Krystal Flash extend a half-inch beyond the white and chartreuse bucktail. Ron ties both bucktail colors in tightly to prevent them from slipping later.

If you fly fish for bass or even if you plan to, you must include this weapon in your arsenal of top productive bass patterns. The Chartreuse Clouser Minnow is easy to tie and well worth the effort.

Chartreuse Clouser Minnow

Hook: Tiemco 8089, size 10 or similar.
Thread: 6/0 monofilament.
Eyes: 5/32 or 6/32 lead eyes.
Wings: Chartreuse and white bucktail with 8 to 10 strands of silver Krystal Flash.



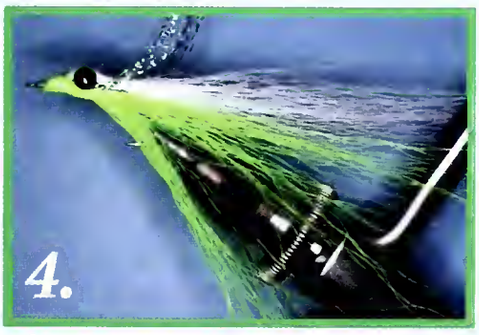
1. Glue the eyes on top of the hook with Super Glue halfway back on the shank.



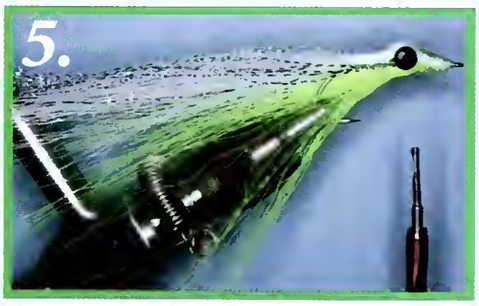
2. Tie in a small bunch of white bucktail just in front of the eyes. Take tying thread and wrap some deer hair in at the bend so that it won't slide. This white bucktail and the chartreuse bucktail should be about 3 to 5 inches long.



3. Rotate the vise and turn it upside down. Add silver Krystal Flash (eight to 10 strands) about 4 inches long in front of the eye. Wait until you've completed the fly to trim the excess Krystal Flash.



4. Cut chartreuse bucktail, place them on top of the white bucktail and tie it in just in front of the eyes. Make certain you have it tied in well.



5. Rotate the hook and then whip finish the head. Trim the excess Krystal Flash so that it extends about a half-inch beyond the bucktail. Apply epoxy to the head and thread.

Fishing the Clouser Minnow

by Carl Haensel

Some flies originated in the Rocky Mountains or the north woods. Many famous flies come from the eastern U.S. Some of the best flies come from Pennsylvania. Bob Clouser, of Royalton, PA, originated his Clouser Minnow in 1984 for Susquehanna River smallmouth bass. The Clouser Minnow is one of the most effective flies used today. Fly-fishing legend Lefty Kreh has landed 86 different species of fish in both freshwater and saltwater using this fly. Still, to make this fly work for you, it must be used correctly. While there are many different techniques for fishing streamers, there are several specific tactics that can make a Clouser Minnow catch smallmouth bass like almost no other pattern.



photo-courtesy of Bob Clouser

Bob Clouser with a Clouser Minnow-caught smallmouth bass

Rod position

Keeping your rod in a high position has its uses in some aspects of fly-fishing, but fishing the Clouser Minnow is not one of them. After you've made your cast, drop your rod tip to the water, take in your slack line, and prepare to strip in the fly. This fly uses an active retrieve, and to impart the best action, you must have your rod low and the rod tip at the water.

Fly retrieval

To give your fly the best action, Bob Clouser recommends using the "Susquehanna strip." This ploy consists of a full arm length strip that is done under your reel. You should end your strip with an abrupt stop. This stop makes your fly dart about, just like the escaping minnow that it's supposed to imitate. You can make this abrupt stop by forcing the thumb on your stripping hand straight rearward. Remember to keep your rod tip low and at the water. Retrieving a streamer with your rod tip up leads to poor fly action and missed strikes.

One of the benefits of using this fly is that it is much more snag-free than other streamers. Tied with the lead eyes on top of the hook, it forces the fly to swim upside-down, which keeps the hook point out of rocks, crevices and debris. Still, since this fly is simple to tie, bring along plenty, and plan to lose some flies.

Have a variety of different weighted eyes on your flies to use in specific situations such as shallow flats or deep runs. Try to keep your fly low and near the bottom as you retrieve it, and vary your retrieve speed as you fish. Some days the smallmouths you're targeting will want the fly whizzing by at warp speed, and sometimes a slower pace will trigger strikes.

Hooking the fish

To hook more fish on your Clouser Minnow or almost any other streamer, you must never stop stripping the fly. Remember that this fly is designed to imitate a minnow that is darting to escape from a predator. If you're retrieving your fly and a fish hits it but doesn't get hooked, keep stripping. You actually need to try to take the fly away from the fish. Think about it—the smallmouth bass that's attacking your fly has never been fed dinner on a platter. A small minnow that's attempting to escape is never going to just stop and sit there. Neither should your fly. This means that when a fish hits, keep stripping in your fly. When it misses, keep stripping in your fly. No matter what—well, you guessed it, just keep that fly moving! Only when you actually feel the fish on the line should you raise up your rod and start to play the bass.

WCO Diary

by WCO Lewis Sweigart

Commercial Traffic

One of the unique aspects about being a waterways conservation officer in Delaware County is the opportunity to work in an area with a high volume of commercial traffic on the Delaware River. Unlike the Three Rivers or Lake Erie, where you can find a large variety of commercial vessels, the Delaware River has ships of immense length, width and height. On the tidal portion of the Delaware River it is common to be sailing along and be passed by several ships of lengths over 1,000 feet in a half-hour's time. Some of these vessels can displace huge amounts of water, creating large wakes that can greatly affect small-boat navigation. These large ships are slow to turn and slow to pick up or dissipate speed. There are very few places on the river where such large vessels can even navigate, and most of them are in the center of the channel. A slight shift in their path can cause a catastrophic accident. Such an accident can greatly affect both commercial interests on the river such as trade with foreign countries and environmental interests, which affect the health and welfare of the river's ecosystem. The owners of these ships from around the world want to avoid such catastrophes, and they pay premium rates to the Delaware River pilots who come aboard these ships and safely navigate them up and down the river, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is a tedious game to navigate such ships, but as anyone who is watching these ships can attest, it is hard not to be awestruck by their majesty and size.

Remember to stay clear of these ships. A small sailboat under sail is used to enjoying the right of way when passing or being overtaken by power vessels, but you lose that privilege when it comes to these ships. Basically, all small recreational boats lose the right of way to ships in the river when the ships are underway or when they are towed. When you stop in the middle of the channel to eat your lunch, it is common to look upstream or downstream and suddenly spot a ship not far off that you didn't see before. And just because you didn't hear that ship coming up behind you, doesn't mean it isn't there.

Furthermore, these ships can't stop or move out of the way. Common sense dictates that you get out of the way, but so do boating laws. Even when a small vessel breaks down in the channel, it is important to get out of the shipping channel by moving as far out of the middle of the channel as possible and avoid a further accident. You need to be sure to give them plenty of room to navigate past you.

Last summer, the *Empress of the Seas*, a 692-foot-long, 100-foot-wide cruise ship left its berth at the old Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. Shortly after launching, with many people waving from the departing ship, recreational boaters wanted to wish the ship well in its journey to the open sea. They began to follow too closely to the ship, and some boats came just up alongside the ship. Many of the boats got too close for comfort for the ship's captain and crew. One boat in particular got so close that the boat operator could almost have reached out and touched the cruise ship's bow. This small boat was less than 16 feet long, compared to this 692-foot-long ship. The operator and passengers of the small boat were so caught up in the commotion that they began to raise up beers in salute to the ship's passengers. They even began to greet the passengers with many different forms of greeting, all the while not realizing just how close to the ship's propellers they had steered.

Deputy Waterways Conservation Officer Peter Thomas and I did pay attention to their position. We were watching them from our patrol boat. We signaled them to move away from the ship and conducted a boarding. After a safety inspection, we found the operator and the two passengers to be under the influence of alcohol. The operator was arrested for boating under the influence of alcohol and the boat was towed back to shore.

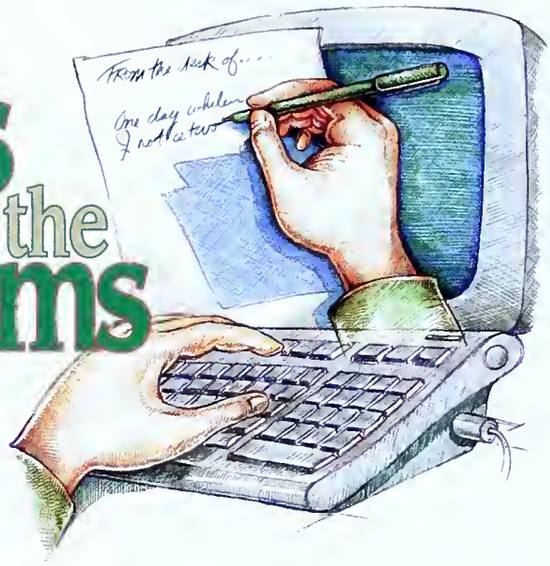
Make sure while you are enjoying your boating this summer on the Delaware River to watch those ships from a safe distance and keep a clear head. Don't drink and boat.



photo-WCO Lewis Sweigart

Some of these vessels can displace huge amounts of water, creating large wakes that can greatly affect small-boat navigation.

Notes from the Streams



Smoke on the Water

Things always seem to happen near the end of a law enforcement boat patrol. WCO Kerr and I were about 5 miles offshore on Lake Erie heading east from Walnut Creek when we noticed a large plume of black smoke rising on the horizon to our northwest. It was a clear day, but we weren't sure of the smoke's source. We considered whether or not to continue northeast, which was about 27 miles by boat to complete our shift. We decided that the smoke deserved a look, so we changed course to investigate.

What seemed like forever was actually more like five to eight minutes, and we found the source—a vessel fully engulfed in flames roughly 8 miles offshore of Walnut Creek. There was another vessel standing by that waved down our patrol boat. When we approached the other vessel, we saw an individual with severe burns on most of his body.

The two boats were fishing together for perch when one of the vessels ran out of gas. The operator decided to siphon some fuel from a portable tank to his main tank when the fire occurred. The injured male indicated that they were also having engine trouble. WCO Kerr and I decided that considering the severity of the adult male's injuries, our best course of action was to transfer him to our patrol boat and head for Walnut Creek. We contacted U.S. Coast Guard Station Erie for assistance with the other disabled vessel and made a call to Walnut Creek to have paramedics standing by.

WCOs undergo training annually in first aid. Unfortunately, traveling at 40 miles an hour on a vessel on Lake Erie is not the norm. We stabilized the victim as best we could and told him to hold on. Our GPS system is a wonderful tool; you can plot anything, which in this instance showed us the fastest route to the access.

Retired WCO John Bowser was at Walnut Creek when we made contact, and he recommended that paramedics should probably have the Lifestar helicopter transport standing by. The transport took about 15 minutes from the time we transferred the victim to our patrol boat. WCO Bowser stopped all incoming and outbound traffic in the marina channel entrance and closed down the ready/launch area for the helicopter's use.

WCO Kerr made an expedited entry through the channel and the local EMS providers were there in force. Once at the dock and secure, we got out of the way. The paramedics who responded jumped onboard and started triage on the victim. Once initial vitals and assessments were complete, the victim was placed onto a stretcher and transported via helicopter to a local hospital.

The U.S. Coast Guard patrol vessel assisted the other vessel into Walnut Creek, and we gathered pertinent information for our boat accident report. During the course of our investigation we learned that an individual onboard was turning the ignition key during the failed refueling, which caused the spark. The victim was hospitalized for several weeks with second- and third-degree burns over a large portion of his body.

There is probably no worse place to have an accident in the Commonwealth than 7 to 8 miles offshore on Lake Erie. You are basically in the middle of a water-filled desert when you need help. I am glad that we took the time and initiative to investigate something that turned out to be a very bad situation for one of our boaters, and that we were able to assist him. I will never mistake that color of smoke again for anything other than burning fiberglass.

Boaters should be aware that we saw the initial smoke when ignition occurred. It took us only 5 to 8 minutes to arrive on the scene, and that vessel had already burned to the waterline. If possible, fish in pairs as these anglers did. Always have your safety equipment ready, and be prepared for anything. It has been a while since this event occurred, but it wouldn't bother me if it was the only time in my career.—*WCO Thomas Edwards.*



photo-Bruce Hanson

Review the safety information on how to fuel your boat, whether your tank is permanently installed on your boat or portable.

Raccoon Creek State Park

by Dennis Tubbs

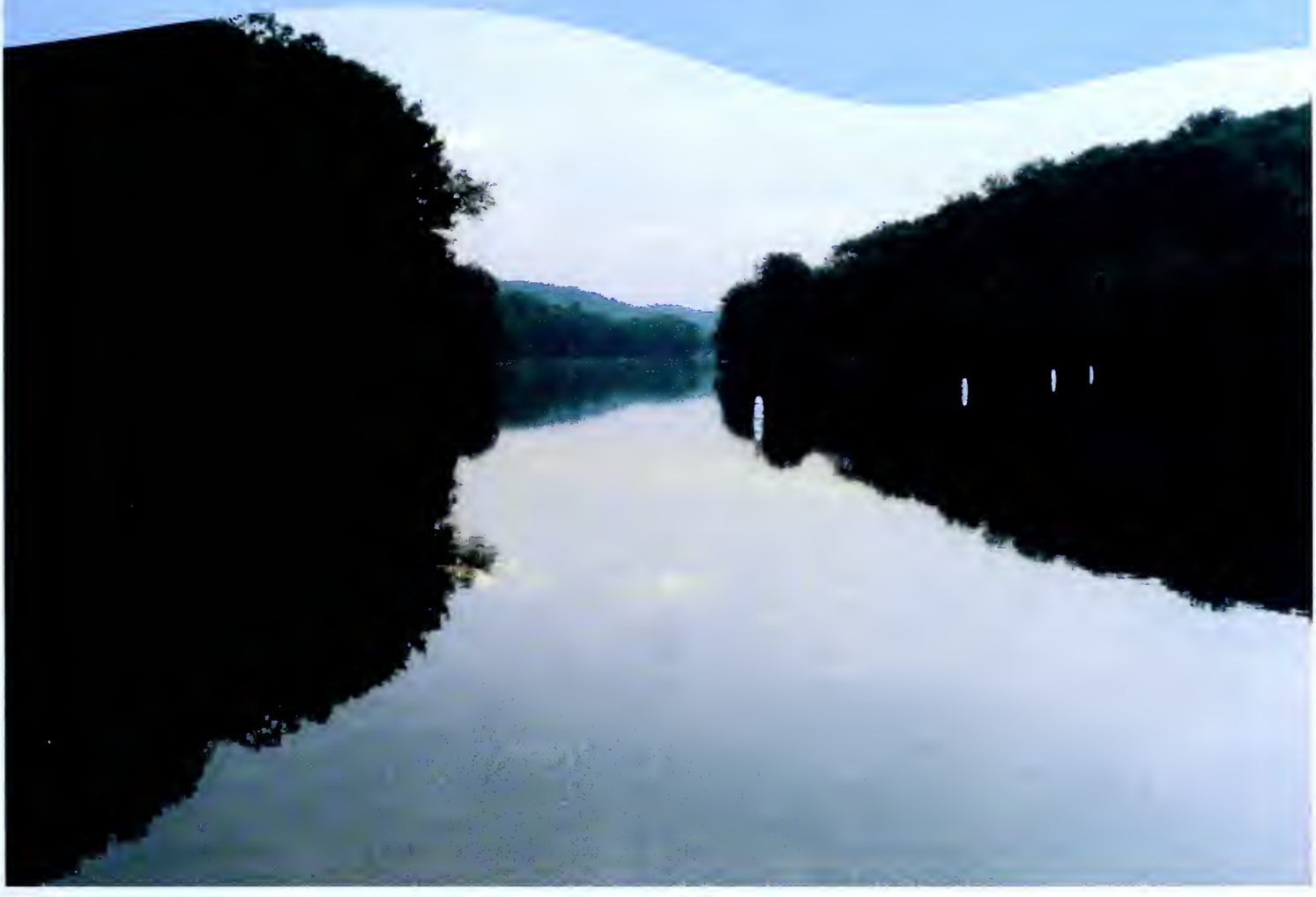


photo-Dennis Tubbs

Located in southern Beaver County, Raccoon Creek State Park is a western Pennsylvania jewel. Conveniently found only a short drive from downtown Pittsburgh on PA Route 18 just north of U.S. Route 22, the park encompasses 7,572 magnificent acres. Raccoon Lake encompasses 101 acres.

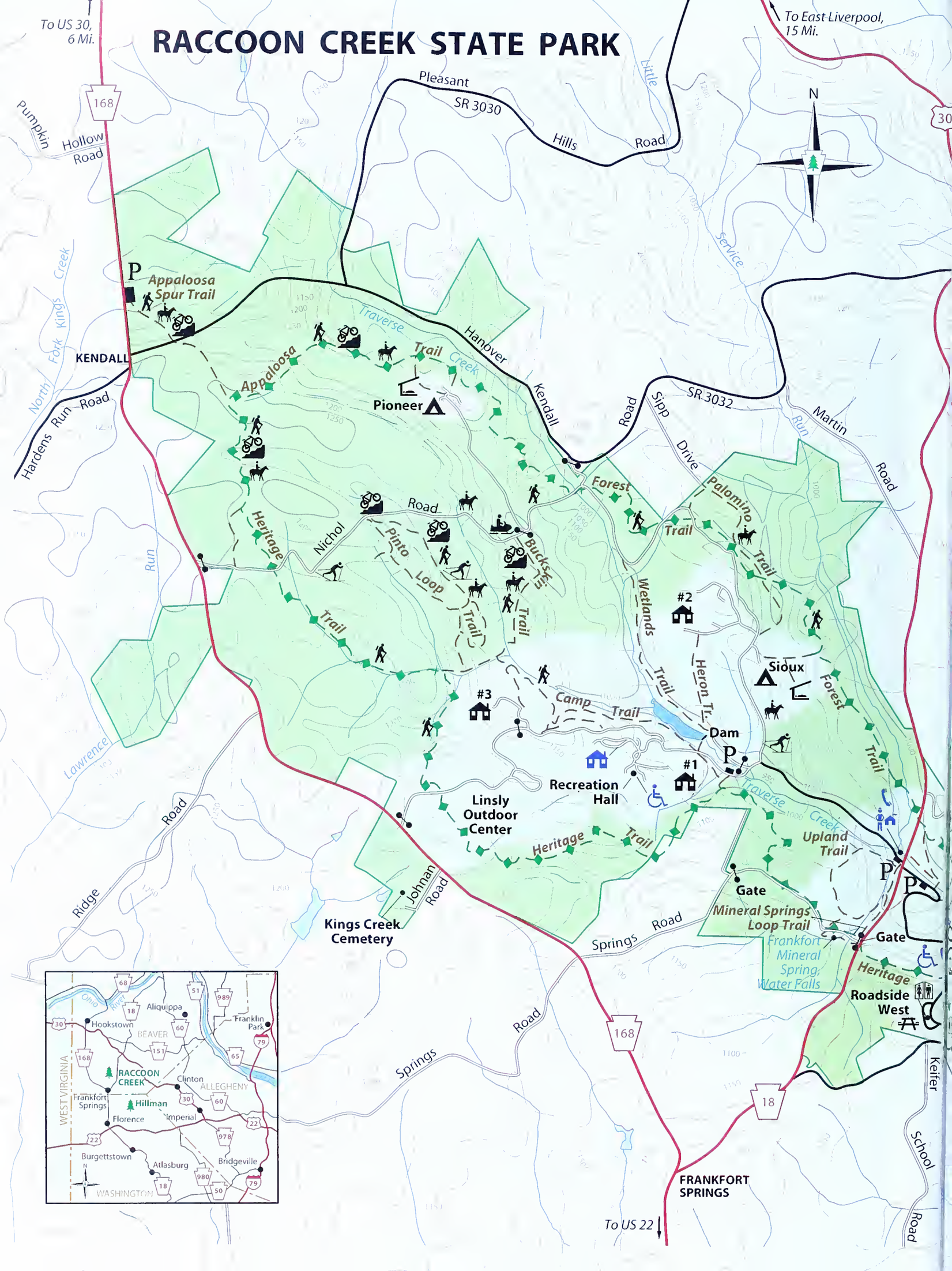
In the 1930s, the National Park Service created the Raccoon Creek National Recreation Demonstration Area. Workers from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) built the park's recreation facilities and began conservation work on park lands. In 1945, the site officially became Raccoon Creek State Park.

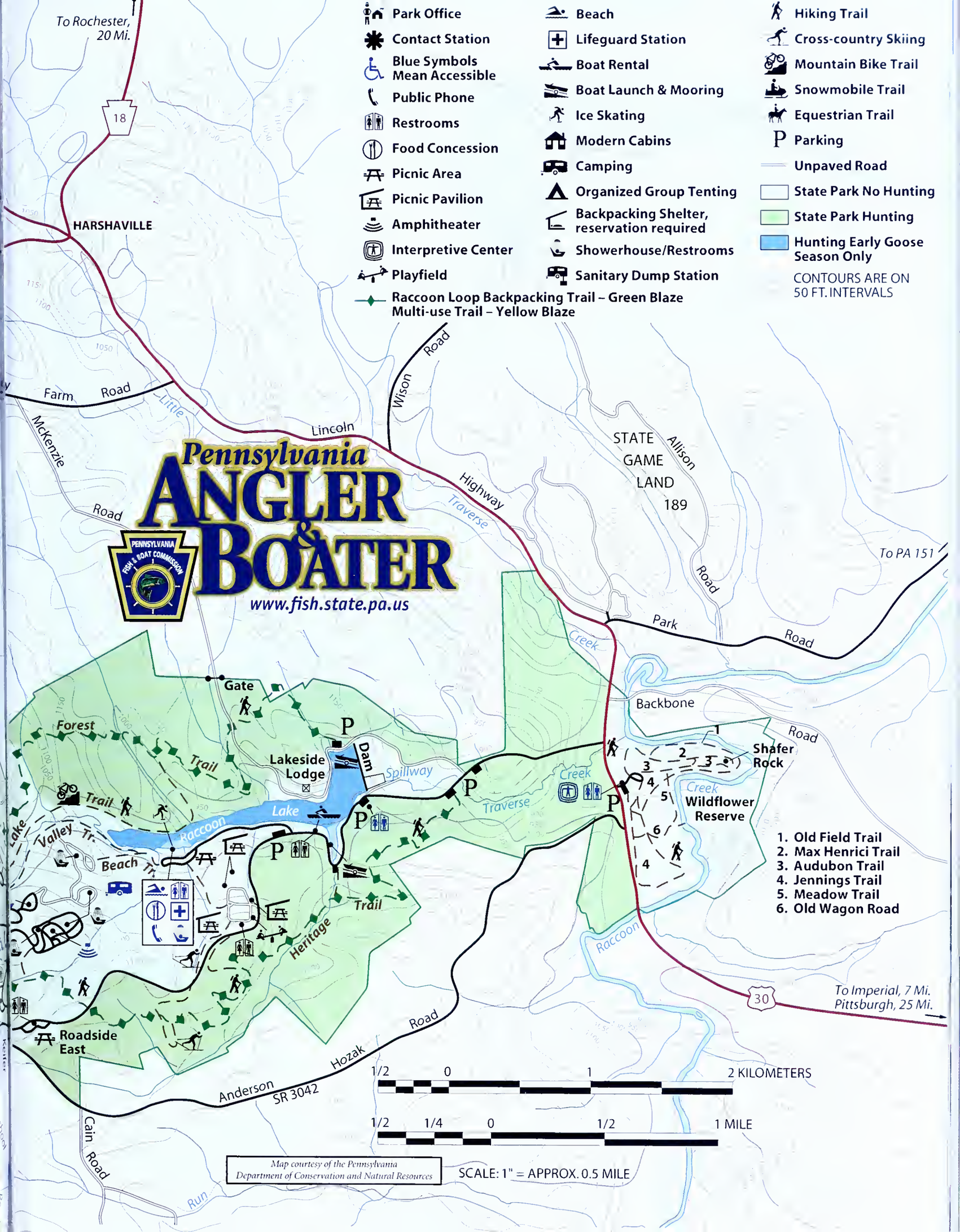
Raccoon Lake, a main attraction of the park, provides many opportunities for boating and fishing. Regulations permit only electric-motored powerboats and non-powered boats, but the lake is easily accessible with two boat launches and 42 mooring spaces. Motorized boats must display a current boat registration. Non-powered boats must display one of the following: PA boat registration, Fish & Boat Commission launch permit, or a mooring permit from the Bureau of State Parks.

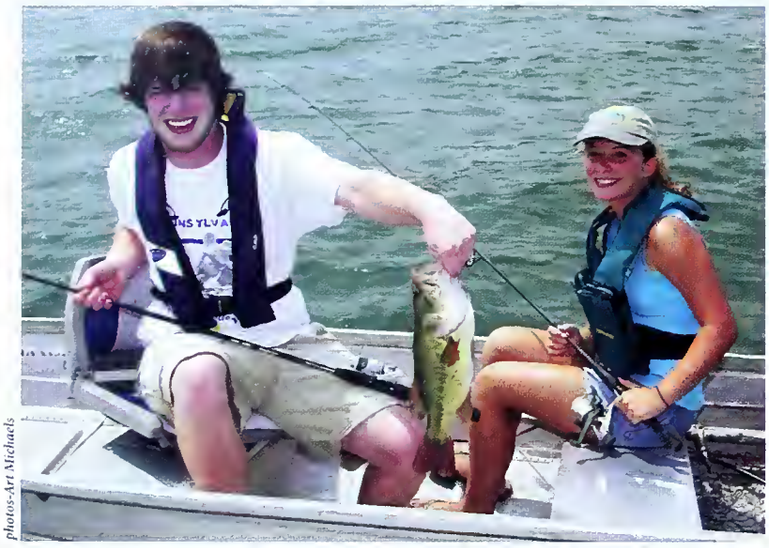
Raccoon Park Road is the main road through the park from U.S. Route 30. Shortly after entering the park, Lake Side Lodge Road is located on your right and leads to the boat ramp near the dam breast, where there is a moderate amount of parking. The second boat access is located just off Raccoon Park Road in a small, protected cove to the right of the road. This access has limited roadside parking but is adjacent to the boat mooring area.

Both ramps have adequate space for launching trailerable boats. Although both of these launch points are suitable for canoes and kayaks,

(article continued on page 34)


RACCOON CREEK STATE PARK
To US 30, 6 Mi.
To East Liverpool, 15 Mi.
N
168
Pumpkin Hollow Road
Pleasant Hills Road
SR 3030
Little Service Run
Appaloosa Spur Trail
KENDALL
North Fork Kings Creek
Hardens Run Road
Traverse Creek Trail
Appaloosa Trail
Pioneer
Hanover Kendall Road
SR 3032
Sipp Drive
Martin Run Road
Forest Trail
Palomino Trail
Heritage Trail
Nichol Run
Road
Pinto Loop Trail
Buckskin Trail
Wetlands Trail
#2
Heron Tr.
Sioux
Forest Trail
#3
Camp Trail
Dam
#1
Recreation Hall
Linsly Outdoor Center
Traverse Creek Trail
Upland Trail
Lawrence Road
Ridge Road
Heritage Trail
Gate
Mineral Springs Loop Trail
Frankfort Mineral Spring, Water Falls
Gate
Heritage Roadside West
Johnan Road
Kings Creek Cemetery
Springs Road
Springs Road
168
18
Keifer School Road
FRANKFORT SPRINGS
To US 22
Ohio River
Aliquippa
Hookstown
BEAVER
Franklin Park
WEST VIRGINIA
RACCOON CREEK
Clinton
ALLEGHENY
Frankfort Springs
Hillman
Florence
Imperial
Burgettstown
Atlasburg
Bridgeville
WASHINGTON


Park Office
Contact Station
Blue Symbols Mean Accessible
Public Phone
Restrooms
Food Concession
Picnic Area
Picnic Pavilion
Amphitheater
Interpretive Center
Playfield
Raccoon Loop Backpacking Trail – Green Blaze
Multi-use Trail – Yellow Blaze
Beach
Lifeguard Station
Boat Rental
Boat Launch & Mooring
Ice Skating
Modern Cabins
Camping
Organized Group Tenting
Backpacking Shelter, reservation required
Showerhouse/Restrooms
Sanitary Dump Station
Hiking Trail
Cross-country Skiing
Mountain Bike Trail
Snowmobile Trail
Equestrian Trail
Parking
Unpaved Road
State Park No Hunting
State Park Hunting
Hunting Early Goose Season Only
CONTOURS ARE ON 50 FT. INTERVALS
Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER
www.fish.state.pa.us
To Rochester, 20 Mi.
18
HARSHAVILLE
Farm Road
McKenzie Road
Little
Lincoln Highway
Wison Road
STATE GAME LAND 189
Allison
Traverse
Creek
Park Road
To PA 151
Backbone
Road
Gate
Forest Trail
Lakeside Lodge
Dam
Spillway
Lake
Raccoon
Lake Valley Tr.
Beach Tr.
Trail
Heritage
Roadside East
Shafer Rock
Wildflower Reserve
1. Old Field Trail
2. Max Henrici Trail
3. Audubon Trail
4. Jennings Trail
5. Meadow Trail
6. Old Wagon Road
Raccoon
30
To Imperial, 7 Mi.
Pittsburgh, 25 Mi.
Hozak Road
Anderson
SR 3042
Cain Road
Run
1/2 0 1 2 KILOMETERS
1/2 1/4 0 1/2 1 MILE
Map courtesy of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
SCALE: 1" = APPROX. 0.5 MILE



photos-Art Michaels

fishermen with a handicapped-accessible fishing pier near the beach area. There are many sport fish at Raccoon Lake. The Fish & Boat Commission stocks coldwater fish such as brook and rainbow trout in the main lake and in feeder streams. The lake is stocked with trout five times annually, but Raccoon Lake is most noted for excellent year-round catches of crappies.

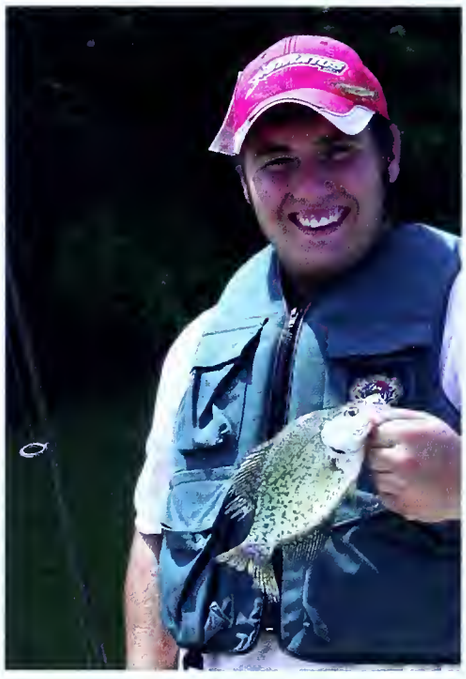
many people launch their non-powered boats at the beach area where a small, grassy section separates a large parking lot from the water's edge.

Some of Raccoon Lake's best fishing is found at the mouth of the cove just after launching from the access point on Raccoon Park Road. The shoreline to the right after leaving the cove is the location of a series of habitat structures that were place several years ago. These structures continue to hold fish. Habitat structures were also placed directly across the lake from the mouth of the cove. There you'll also find an ample population of fish that makes for excellent angling. This location is a short distance from the Lake Side Lodge Road access point. It's also the spot where a 7- to 8-pound largemouth bass was caught and released in 2006.

Shoreline fishing is found just off Raccoon Park Road between the boat ramp and the beach area. An easy walking path follows the shoreline in this area.

The largemouth bass caught last season was an unusual catch for Raccoon Lake, but that might be attributed to a relocation of fish from Dutch Fork Lake, Green County. When Dutch Fork Lake was drained because of difficulties with the dam, Commission staff transported some 1,000 displaced bass to Raccoon Lake that were estimated to weigh between 4 and 6 pounds.

Raccoon Lake is a great fishing spot for both boaters and shoreline



Among the many Raccoon Lake amenities is a boat rental located near the entrance to the beach. Parking is to the right of the entrance to the beach in the area of the main park. The facility offers various types of boats for rent including rowboats, canoes, kayaks and paddleboats. They also provide fishing tackle, bait, camping supplies, refreshments and firewood for sale. Discounts are available for groups, organizations, Scouts, campers, seniors, students and frequent renters. The boat rental opens on the first day of trout season and operates until mid-October.

For more information about boat rentals, call 724-899-4130.

There are 172 modern and trailer campsites in the park. Campsites are open the second Friday in April to mid-October. Rustic sites are available from mid-October to mid-April. Several campsites offer a playground and restrooms with hot showers. There are also sites available for rent with modern cabins that include a furnished living area, kitchen/dining room, and toilet/shower room. The park's pristine beauty and simple comfort of the modern cabins make an excellent combination for pleasant getaways or inexpensive vacations for those families who want to experience Pennsylvania's wonderful fishing, wildlife and nature. The park includes 45 miles of hiking trails, 17 miles of biking trails and 16 miles of horseback riding trails.

Adjacent to the boat rental and beach swimming area is a food concession that is open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week from Memorial Day weekend until Labor Day. For a current menu and operating times, call 724-899-4177. Inclement weather may affect business hours.

Raccoon Creek State Park is a legacy, created by a society experiencing a great depression and preserved by decades of dedicated people. It is a gift of opportunity from people of the past to any who wish to experience the nature and beauty of Pennsylvania in the present.

Dennis Tubbs is the Fish & Boat Commission's Southwest Region aquatic resources program specialist.

More Information

Visit these web sites to find directions to the park and to learn more about Raccoon Lake:

- **www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/raccooncreek/aspx.**
- **http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/map/pfbcmaps/beavermain.htm.**

Pennsylvania's BIGGEST BUCKETMOUTHS:

compiled by Art Michaels

When, Where and How Anglers Caught Them

The Fish & Boat Commission recorded 24 Senior Angler Awards and 20 Catch & Release Awards for largemouth bass caught in 2006. The biggest of these bass was a 10-pound, 4-ouncer caught in July on a scented bait in Pymatuning Lake.

Anglers made nearly year-round qualifying largemouth bass catches: In March, 4; in April, 6; May, 2; June, 3; July, 8; August, 8; September, 7; October, 4; and November, 2. The Commission received no Senior Angler or Catch & Release award applications for largemouths caught in January, February or December.

Four catches were made in Lake Arthur; 3 catches each were made in Lake Wilhelm and Cross Creek Lake; 2 catches each, Minsi Lake, Beltzville Lake and Shohola Lake; and one catch each in Buzzard Swamp, Canoe Lake, Cedar Lake, Chapman Lake, Cranberry Glade Lake, Dunlap Lake, Faylor Lake, Hills Creek Lake, Dunlap Creek Lake, Green Lane Reservoir, Kahle Lake, Lackawanna State Park Lake, Lake Erie, Lake Meade, Leaser Lake, Little Chartiers Creek, Memorial Lake, Muddy Run Recreation Lake, Northmoreland Park Lake, Lake Ontelaunee, and Pymatuning Lake. Several other locations weren't identified.

Three bass were in the 4-pound range, 15 bass were in the 5-pound range, 4 bass were in the 6-pound range, and 5 bass were in the 7-pound range. All of the fish were between 20 inches and 23.75 inches long.

Five fish took minnows, 15 fish went for crankbaits, 6 bass hit plastic worms, 7 bass hit jigs, and 2 bass took spinnerbaits. The other lures or baits weren't identified.

Bass Resources

For a wealth of largemouth bass information, visit the Commission web site's "PA Bruise Brothers" pages on black bass, including largemouth, smallmouth and spotted bass. Go to **www.fish.state.pa.us** and in the search area enter "bruise." Or type this direct link into your browser: **http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/bass.htm**.

Angler Awards



This award information includes only Senior Angler Awards and Catch & Release Awards for fish caught in 2006. The Commission Angler Award Program also includes First Fish, Junior Angler and Husky Musky awards. Senior and Junior Angler awards have minimum qualifying weights. Catch & Release awards have minimum qualifying lengths. For Angler Award Program details, and to view, download or print Angler Award rules and applications, visit the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**. On the main page's left side, hold your cursor over "Fish," and click on "Pennsylvania Fishes." Then navigate to "Angler Award Program." The Commission processes more than 1,200 Angler Awards annually.

On the "Pennsylvania Fishes" page you'll also see a link to "State Record Fish," which includes details on state-record fish catches and rules, instructions for anglers and applications for state-record fish designation.

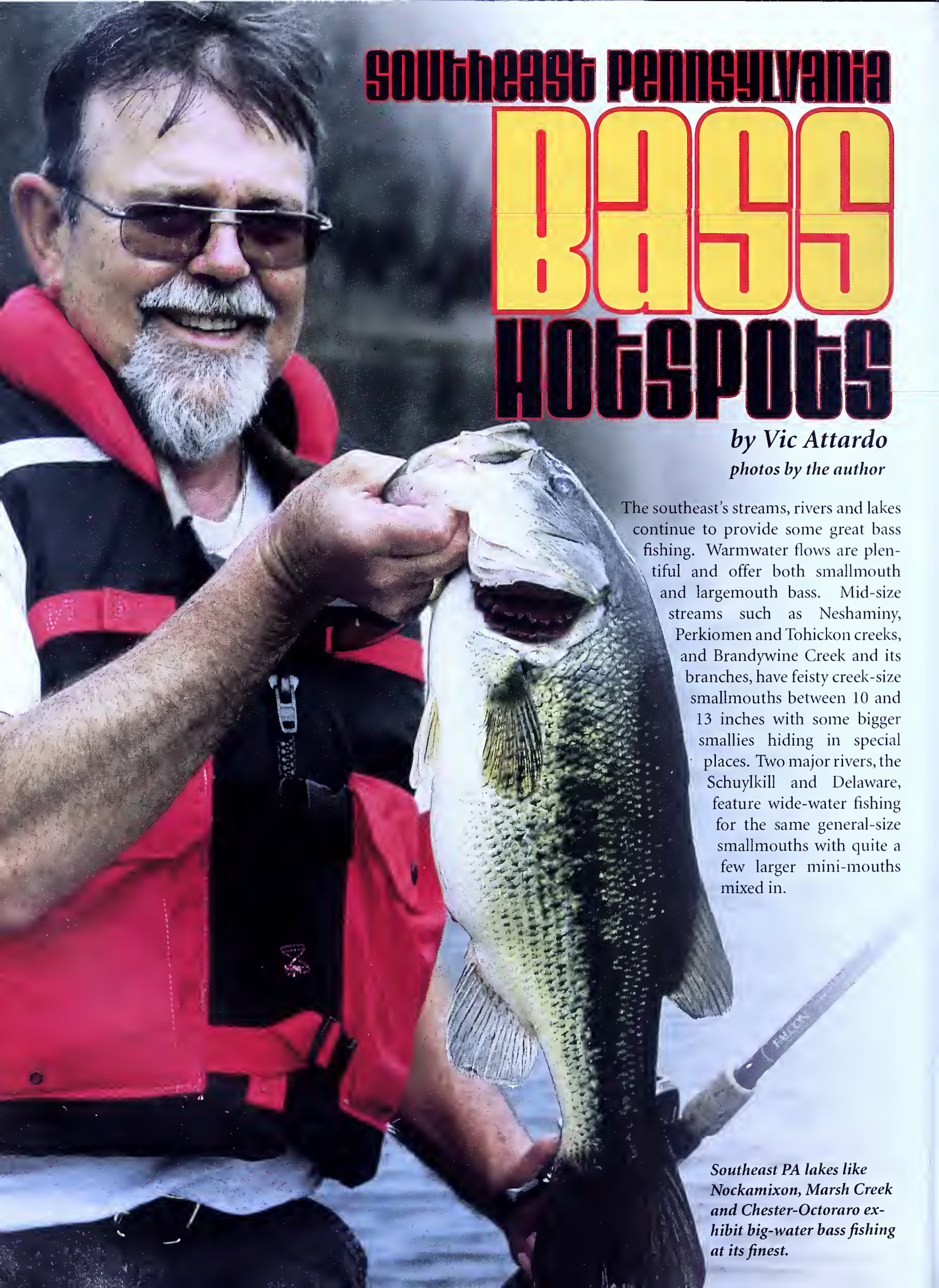
Also on the "Pennsylvania Fishes" page check Part III of the "Weight-Length Estimators." You can use this handy chart to estimate the weight of bass and other fish you catch after determining the fish's length.

Southeast Pennsylvania BASS Hotspots

by Vic Attardo

photos by the author

The southeast's streams, rivers and lakes continue to provide some great bass fishing. Warmwater flows are plentiful and offer both smallmouth and largemouth bass. Mid-size streams such as Neshaminy, Perkiomen and Tohickon creeks, and Brandywine Creek and its branches, have feisty creek-size smallmouths between 10 and 13 inches with some bigger smallies hiding in special places. Two major rivers, the Schuylkill and Delaware, feature wide-water fishing for the same general-size smallmouths with quite a few larger mini-mouths mixed in.



Southeast PA lakes like Nockamixon, Marsh Creek and Chester-Octoraro exhibit big-water bass fishing at its finest.

Largemouth fishing in the southeast is available in many lakes and major portions of the big rivers. Lakes over 500 acres including Nockamixon, Marsh Creek and Chester-Octoraro exhibit big-water bass fishing at its southeast finest. Mid-size lakes, such as Chambers, Struble, Luxembourg and Galena, are great for the small-boat experience. In addition, there is the nearly untapped largemouth fishing in the lower Delaware and Schuylkill rivers. Though these waters present a challenge, the rewards, as measured by a fish scale, can be great.

Lower Delaware River largemouths

It's a matter of timing the tides, but when you hit it right, the Delaware River below Trenton is the most exciting bass fishing the southeast has to offer. With giant ocean-going ships rumbling by and the Philadelphia skyline in the background, the Delaware River can be a daunting place to catch bass. But the industrial shorelines, rich with old wood and forgotten wrecks, hold largemouths like you wouldn't believe.

One trick I've learned fishing with some of the river's best veterans is to stay below the low-tide line. Often the bigger bass do not move up as far as you'd think with the high tide, although the changing of the tide from high to low triggers a feed.

It's important to keep ahead of the changing tide. A quick boat run of a few miles will keep you fishing the best moments of the tidal change, whereas staying in one spot, the tide passes you by.

There are hotspots up and down the lower Delaware River. Any wharf, cove, bay or marina on either side of the river can be good, and so can the juncture of the lower Schuylkill River where it flows into the mighty D.

There are no motor restrictions on the Delaware River. Plenty of horsepower will help speed you from one tidal location to another.



Small-boat bass fishing is good in mid-size southeast lakes like Chambers, Struble, Luxembourg and Galena.

The Delaware River under tidal influence is managed with special regulations. See page 8 of the current *Pennsylvania Fishing Summary*.

Delaware River smallmouths

The difference between the tidal Delaware and the southeast's river-flow Delaware is truly like night and day. From the confluence with the Lehigh River in Easton downstream to Trenton, the Delaware belongs to smallmouth bass. These bass are plentiful, often hefty and usually eager to strike.

The beauty of this section is that it can be fished either by wading or in a small boat. In addition, the smallmouth bass will hit so many different presentations, it would be flat out incorrect to champion one tactic over another.

Still, in the hot summer months, wading and fly-fishing with a weighted streamer, nymph or surface fly is a great pleasure.

Key areas to fish are at the mouths of streams that enter the Delaware both on the Pennsylvania and New Jersey side. The Keystone State has good accessible fishing at Tohickon Creek, Cook's Creek, Fry's Run and Bushkill Creek, to name a few. You'll find many other spots along the PA Route 32 and PA Route 61 river roads in Bucks and Northampton counties.

There are no motor restrictions on the smallmouth zone on the Delaware River. However, jetboats have the advantage of cruising over shallow summer water, while canoes and kayaks can go anywhere, cautiously.

Schuylkill River smallmouths

Talk about untapped, for 147 river miles from south of Port Clinton through Hamburg, Reading, Pottstown and into Phoenixville, Norristown, Conshohocken and Manayunk, you can find plenty of good smallmouth fishing on the Schuylkill River.

Much of the Schuylkill River is not difficult to read, but it can be tough to comprehend. There are classic structures, namely riffles, runs and shallow pools, but in no other flow can I picture them as so intertwined. With the river a kind of mishmash of all things at once, the smallies tend to be anywhere.

In addition, there are pockets of largemouth fishing along portions of the lower Schuylkill River that defy placement. One such area is from the Norristown dam downstream to the Betzwood Bridge. The deep water and braided flow around the Haws Avenue boat ramp provide hefty bigmouth angling right in the middle of the predominantly smallmouth flow.

There are intermittent wading spots in the upper Schuylkill River from Hamburg

through Pottstown and Phoenixville, but the lower river belongs primarily to the small-boat angler mainly because of limited access.

Where the Schuylkill River is shallow, an angler can catch as many smallmouths as on any southeast flow. However, once the river gets thicker, it takes more attention to detail to catch these fish. Yet, often they're larger than ones found upstream. In these deeper waters, a good tool is a small double willowleaf spinnerbait. In the upper reaches, fly-fishermen can use their entire caches while hardware anglers do very well with grubs and other small soft plastics.

There are not boating restrictions on the Schuylkill River, but prop engines are a disadvantage in low water.

Note the Schuylkill River's special regulations for tidally influenced water. See page 8 of the *Pennsylvania Fishing Summary.*

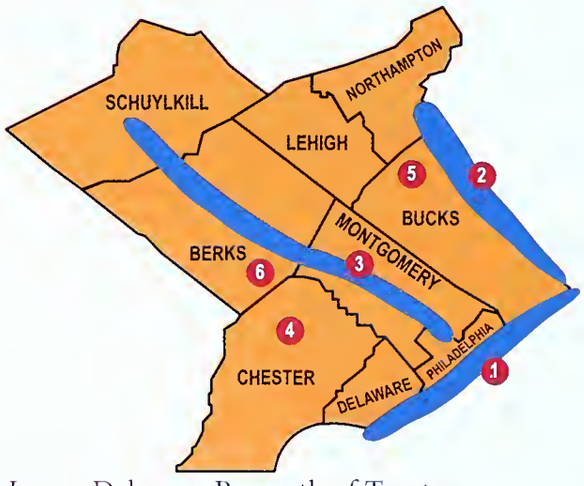
Marsh Creek Lake

Right now the largemouths are using this waterway's thick aquatic vegetation as homes and ambush avenues, and the grass holds big bass with big appetites.

Just when you think this Marsh Creek State Park, Chester County, impoundment had had its last hurrah, and a year or two passes with fishing not up to Marsh Creek Lake's standards, along comes another stellar season in which big bass are a common occurrence.

While daytime fishing during July and August can be a drag, dark summer nights on Marsh Creek are a great adventure. Last year, I renewed my love affair with the inky blackness of this lake, fishing along with local angler Joe Spitz. We didn't light up the skies all night, but there were periods of hot fishing that produced some hefty fish—actually, just what you'd expect of night fishing.

Southeast PA Bass Hotspots



1. Lower Delaware R., south of Trenton
2. Delaware R., Easton to Trenton
3. Schuylkill R., Port Clinton, Schuylkill Co., to Phila.
4. Marsh Ck. Lake, Marsh Ck. State Park, Chester Co.
5. Nockamixon Lk., Nockamixon State Park, Bucks Co.
6. Hopewell Lake, French Ck. State Park, Berks Co.

Spitz showed me a trick I never considered before while nighting—he had me fishing the shadows created by the moon over the woodland banks. Fishing shadows at night sounds like an oxymoron in the making, but it certainly worked.

Only electric motors can be used on Marsh Creek Lake.

Nockamixon Lake

At 1,450 acres, Nockamixon is the biggest of the best in the region. What I like about Nockamixon is that this Bucks County lake, in Nockamixon State Park, contains all manner of structure, including surface weeds, stump fields, stone bluffs, creek channels, bridge pillars and boulder fields. This is, indeed, a varied lake, and make no mistake—it holds big largemouth bass. Though 2-pound bass are the most common swimmers, every year it produces fish up to 7 or 8 pounds.

However, having so much structure requires a very big tackle box. I admit there are times I've tried practically everything in the boat to no avail, only to find one wayward lure that finally produced like gangbusters. Nockamixon's largemouths can be awfully tough on an angler, and that's all there is to it.

During the hot summer when the lake creates a fish-impenetrable thermocline, I do best in the evenings working weedy shorelines with floating worms, swimming jigs and buzzbaits. Early in the morning, I now drop shot all weed edges with interesting success.

As the season progresses, the stone bluffs at the lower end of the lake, just above the dam, start producing excellent smallmouths.

There's a 20 hp engine limit there.

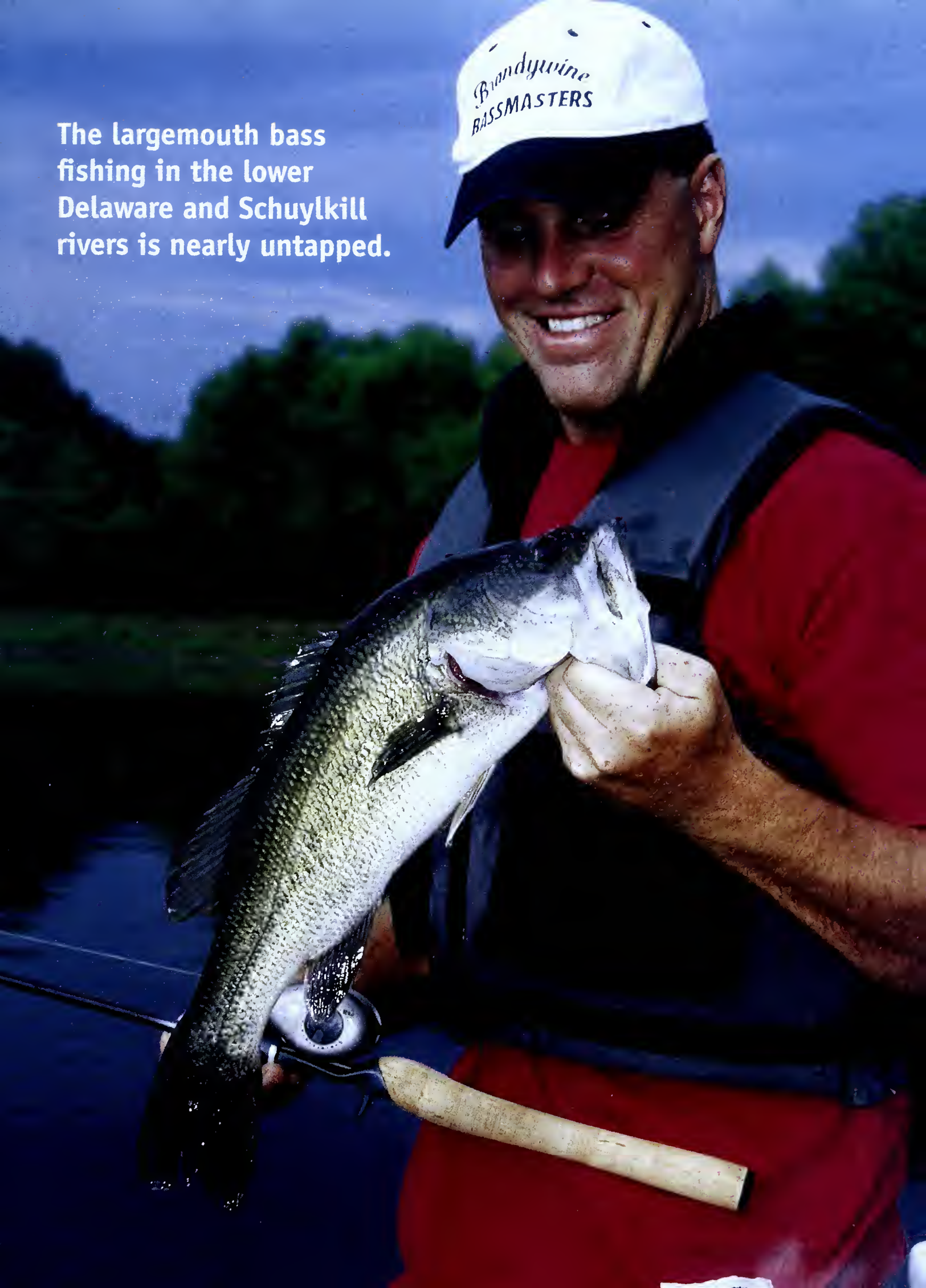
Hopewell Lake

A little impoundment in Berks County's French Creek State Park is my daytime favorite in the southeast. For its diminutive 68-acre size, Hopewell Lake has some surprisingly deep water with the lower oval carrying depths over 12 feet. In addition, the tall-stem weeds that grow in this area often reach from the bottom to the top—Jack and the Beanstalk kind of stuff.

If you happen to hit Hopewell Lake soon after they've reduced the grass, you're in for a slow go. The bass just don't like to have the roof of their homes chopped off. But if there are canopies on the surface, you could be in for a hot time even on a hot day. Be sure to get below the grass with bottom-hugging presentations, namely jigs and weighted soft plastics. You won't get the number of bites you might with a spinnerbait or such, but the heavy stuff is what produces the bigger bass on this lake.

Only electric motor use is allowed here.

Marsh Creek Lake, Nockamixon Lake and Hopewell Lake are managed with Big Bass Program regulations. See page 7 of the *Pennsylvania Fishing Summary.*

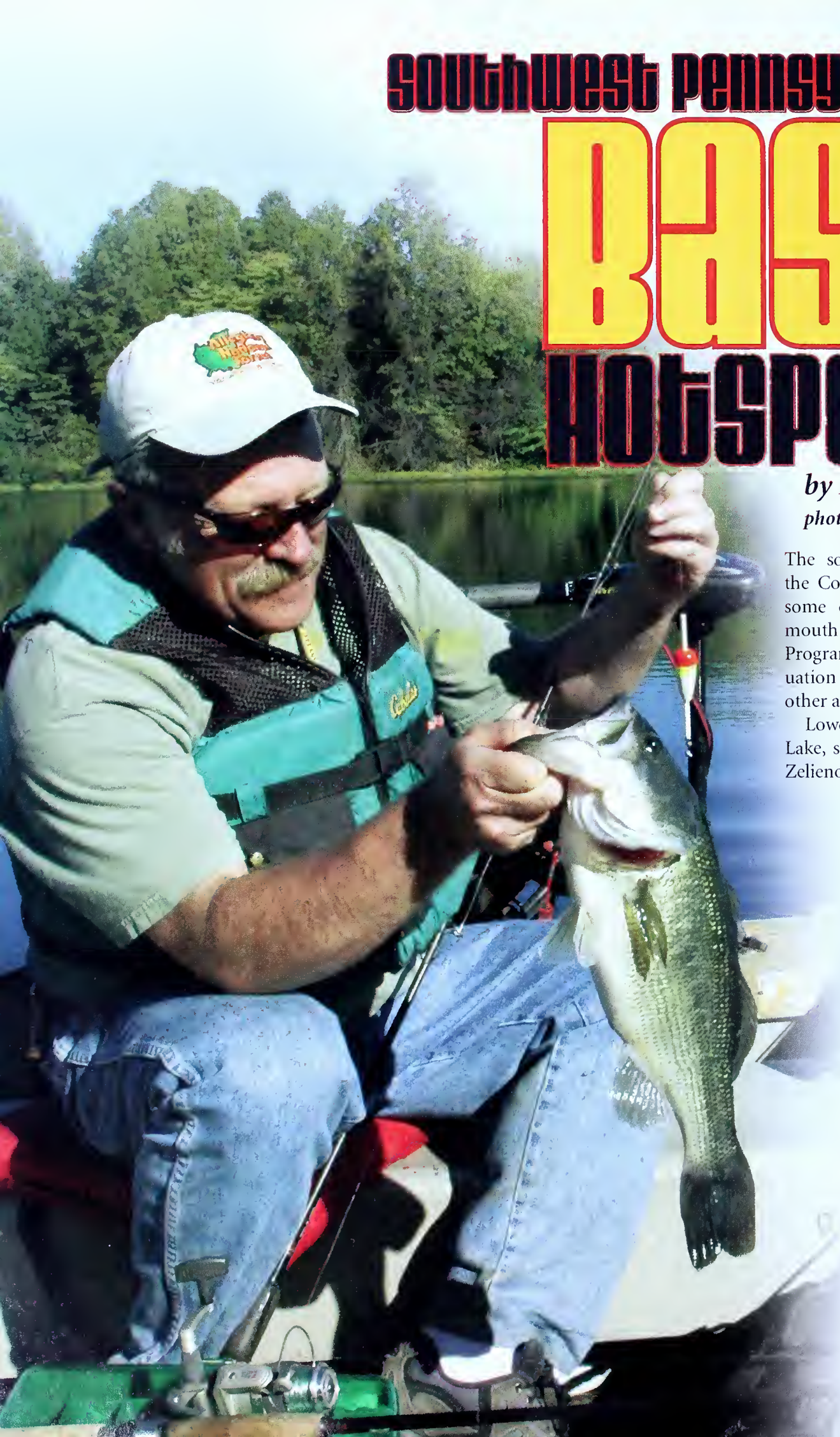


The largemouth bass fishing in the lower Delaware and Schuylkill rivers is nearly untapped.

Southwest Pennsylvania BASS Hotspots

by Mike Bleech

photos by the author



The southwest corner of the Commonwealth holds some of our best largemouth bass water. Big Bass Program rules help the situation here and at several other area lakes.

Lower Hereford Manor Lake, situated just west of Zelienople in Beaver Coun-

ty, gets my nod as one of the best bass lakes in southwest Pennsylvania because it provides an interesting option. Here is a place where a bass angler can fish from shore or from a small boat and catch top-quality fish. Too much emphasis these days is put on high-speed, high-tech bass fishing. An angler who simply wants to spend a couple of hours with the family can get lost in the confusion. The 5-pound bass I caught and released there recently could just as easily have been caught from shore.

Southwest PA is blessed with several small lakes similar to Lower Hereford Manor Lake. Also in Beaver County look at 28-acre Brady Run Lake, where Big Bass regulations are having good results. In Fayette County, 50-acre Dunlap Creek Lake had 50 percent of surveyed bass longer than 12 inches and 19 percent longer than 15 inches in a survey last May. Only 10 percent of the bass in a 2004 survey at 33-acre Virgin Run Dam, also in Fayette County, were longer than 12 inches, but that could lead to good fishing now, three years later. Wilmore Dam in Cambria County gave up a 6.5-pound largemouth placing fourth in the 2004 Angler Recognition Program. An 8.4-pound largemouth was captured during a 2004 Commission survey at North Park Lake in Allegheny County. Six smaller Westmoreland County lakes are managed with Big Bass regulations, more waterways than any other county.

Take a closer look also at Cross Creek Lake as a top trophy bass lake in southwest PA.

After launching at Cross Creek Lake late last year, we talked with a couple of serious bass anglers who were waiting for their fishing partners to return from the parking lot. Both spoke of bass in the 5-pound to 7-pound class. One of those anglers was a West Virginia resident who often comes here with a bass club and for more casual outings.

In 2003, two Cross Creek Lake largemouths were among the top five in the Commission Angler Recognition Program, a 7-pound, 15.2-ounce fish that was fifth, and an 8-pound, 13-ounce fish that was third. It's virtually certain that 7-pound bass are caught and released here each year.

According to Area 8 Fisheries Manager Rick Lorson, water quality and habitat grow big fish of several species at Cross Creek Lake. Soils and rocks under this manmade lake have good alkalinity. Habitat is very good for bass with a mix of cover including weed beds and fallen trees. Unlike most Pennsylvania impoundments, some trees were left standing when the lake was filled. There are extensive shallow flats and a large amount of deeper water. Sunken road beds also form structure of interest to bass anglers.

A recent Commission survey of Cross Creek Lake looked at largemouth bass, and the report noted that this lake continues to have one of the best largemouth bass densities in the Commonwealth.

This lake gets a lot of respect from those who fish it, but it receives less publicity than some other lakes of equal potential.

Cross Creek Lake actually is closer to Pittsburgh than Lake Arthur, but getting there requires a bit more in navigation skills. It's in an out-of-the-way part of Washington County removed from all major highways. County Park Road, which leads to the boat ramp, is reached from PA Route 50 at Rea.

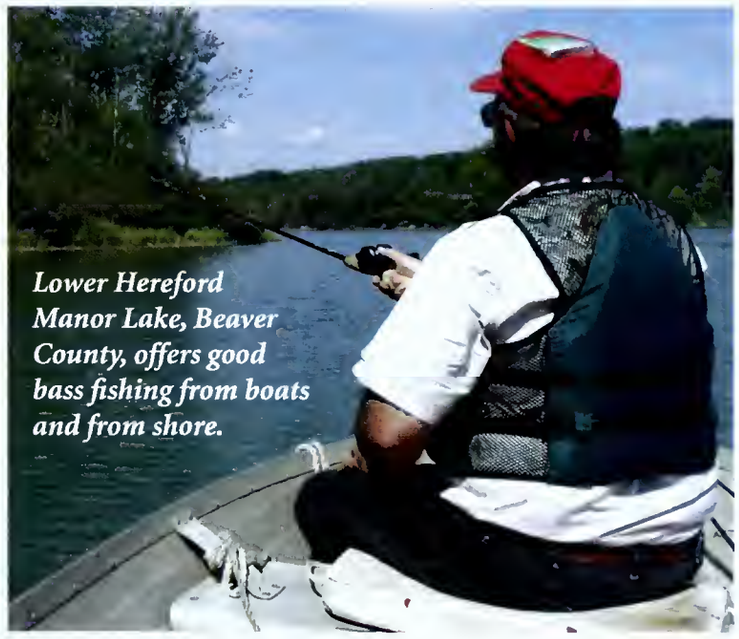
And while Lake Arthur is in a more highly developed state park, Cross Creek Lake is in a county park. In addition to Fish & Boat Commission regulations including Big Bass Program rules, there are county park rules that must be followed at Cross Creek Lake. Boats are limited to 10 hp. Be sure to read park regulations posted at the access area, and check in at the office for user fees. A county-issued boat permit is required.

The lower Allegheny River has been getting a lot of press lately for its smallmouth bass fishing, even attracting national attention. It's true that the smallmouth fishing has improved considerably here over the past several years. But it doesn't rate nearly as highly as the Youghiogheny River Lake. This lake ranked second in the state among 26 larger lakes for smallmouth bass density based on nighttime electrofishing over the past decade. The lake gets the nod with a wink for the best smallmouth fishery in the region.

A steep, rocky shoreline drops into an average depth of about 54 feet. Bring an assortment of deep-diving crankbaits and jigs.

Youghiogheny River Lake lies along the border of Fayette County and Somerset County. The lake's 2,840-acre normal summer pool stretches 16 miles, the upper 5 miles in Maryland. Note that either a Pennsylvania fishing license or a Maryland fishing license is valid for fishing from a boat in the main body of Youghiogheny River Lake, but this rule doesn't apply to fishing in the coves or tributaries and it doesn't include shore fishing.

Not far from Youghiogheny River Lake in Somerset County, High Point Lake gets less attention. This waterway is a much smaller lake, 338 acres, with a mix of small-



Lower Hereford Manor Lake, Beaver County, offers good bass fishing from boats and from shore.



Indiana County's Yellow Creek Lake offers good fishing for both largemouth and smallmouth bass.

mouth bass and largemouth bass. A 2005 Fish & Boat Commission survey found largemouth bass to 20 inches and smallmouth bass to 19 inches.

In 2001, a 10-pound, 3-ounce High Point Lake bass was the top largemouth in the Angler Recognition Program.

Smallmouth bass density here ranks eighth out of 28 medium-size lakes and reservoirs over the past decade.

Fishing at High Point Lake can be notoriously challenging. Bass density might not be as high as it is in some other lakes for either largemouths or smallmouths individually, but in combination and with trophy potential brought into the equation, it adds up to a first-rate bass fishery.

Yellow Creek Lake has quietly become one of the Commonwealth's top bass fisheries with good prospects for both smallmouths and largemouths. A Fish & Boat Commission survey last year indicated that Big Bass regulations were resulting in a generally improving bass population.

In that survey, 13 percent of the captured largemouths and 7 percent of the captured smallmouths were greater than 15 inches in length.

On the list of smallmouth bass density among larger lakes, Yellow Creek Lake ranked tenth among the 26 lakes listed.

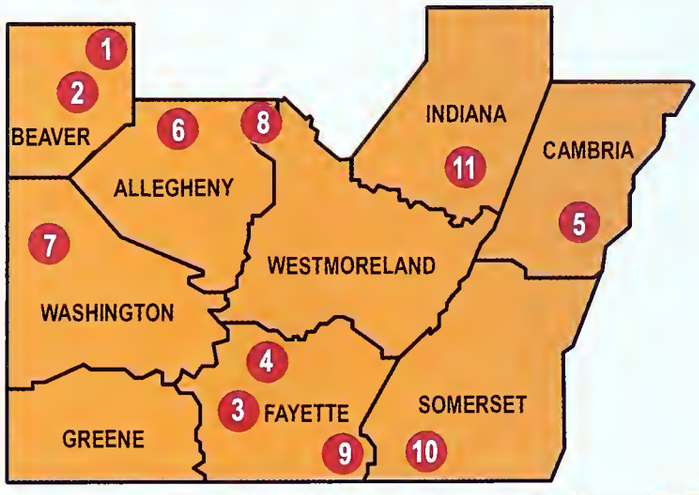
This lake is one of our larger state park lakes with a surface area of 720 acres. As you might expect with both smallmouth and largemouth bass, it has two distinctly different natures. Look for smallmouths along the rockier, deeper northern shore and particularly toward the dam. Largemouths can be found anywhere in the lake and dominate the southern shore, where the bottom is softer and more gentle with more weed growth.

Yellow Creek Lake is in central Indiana County just east of Indiana. Boats are limited to motors not greater than 20 hp.

Stay current with the hottest bass information by regularly checking the Biologist Reports on the Fish & Boat Commission web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**. On the main page's left side, hold your cursor over "Fish" and click on "Fishing Near You." Then Click on the map labeled "Biologist Reports." For the Southwest Region click on Areas 8, 1 and 2.

Southwest PA Bass Hotspots

1. Lower Hereford Manor Lake, Beaver Co.
2. Brady Run Lake, Beaver Co.
3. Dunlap Creek Lake, Fayette Co.
4. Virgin Run Dam, Fayette Co.
5. Wilmore Dam, Cambria Co.
6. North Park Lake, Allegheny Co.
7. Cross Creek Lake, Washington Co.
8. Lower Allegheny River
9. Youghiogheny River Lake, Fayette/Somerset Cos.
10. High Point Lake, Somerset Co.
11. Yellow Creek Lake, Indiana County





Do's and Don'ts for Crowded Launch Ramps

by Art Michaels

Suppose that every time you launched your boat, no one tied up the dock, and each time you retrieved your boat, the ramp was clear and you waited for your turn only momentarily, if at all.

Enjoying these circumstances isn't impossible. It just takes a little application of the Golden Rule and some launch ramp smarts when accesses are crowded. Use these six ideas to make launching and retrieving more efficient, safer and faster for everyone.

• Get to know your favorite accesses so that you can plan your launching and retrieving for maximum efficiency. Boaters tie up launch ramps because they don't realize that many access sites have specially built areas for launch preparation and for tie-down after retrieval, or they don't know where to park to make launch and retrieval preparations at accesses with no formal preparation areas. These spots are called rigging and derigging areas. They are usually adjacent to the ramp or very nearby. If we used these places routinely, more boaters could launch and retrieve, and a long line at the ramp itself could be shortened.

• Before you launch your boat at an unfamiliar access, look the place over and decide how you're going to launch and retrieve for maximum speed and safety. Is there a dock at which you can get your gear ready immediately after launching and where, out of the way of those who are launching and retrieving, you can secure your equipment before retrieving? Will the wind or current make maneuvering your rig for launching and retrieving difficult? If you launch on the Delaware River, will a tide change make you alter your launching and retrieval plan?

• Some small accesses don't have formal places for rigging and derigging. If a launch site doesn't have rigging and derigging areas, prepare for launching in a parking space. As soon as you retrieve your boat at this kind of access and get it on the trailer, attach the bow hook and make your way slowly to the parking area. There, away from others trying to launch and retrieve their boats, work with your equipment and get ready to leave. Remember that the ramp itself is only for launching and retrieving, not for preparing your boat and gear.

• Before you return to the ramp to retrieve your boat, put your tackle away, prepare mooring lines and get everything ready that's coming out of the boat for storagein your tow vehicle. Don't perform these tasks on the ramp. You won't tie up the ramp this way, and you'll get home faster. In addition, when you launch the next time, organizing your gear this way can help you get under way faster.

• If ramps have docks, where you can wait for friends or complete your boating preparations, use them instead of waiting on the launch ramp. You can also beach your boat on smooth shorelines at the launch site either to wait for friends to board or to wait your turn to retrieve your boat.

• Make a written checklist for launching and retrieving. You increase your efficiency by getting your gear ready for use and by storing items quickly. A routine governed by a checklist increases your efficiency and lets you spend the least amount of time at the ramp.

A checklist also reminds you to perform necessary tasks before launching, like putting the plug in and removing the transom tie-down straps.

Applying these ideas before you launch can make boating safer for you and others at the ramp. Using these ideas can also give you and other boaters more time on the water. Crowded launch sites don't always have to mean long waits and frayed nerves. It's up to us.

The Fairview State Fish Hatchery



photo-DWCO Randy Leighton

by Deputy Waterways Conservation Officer Randy Leighton

Quietly, without much fanfare and rarely noticed by the angling public, Ray Youngs and his Fairview State Fish Hatchery team of three fulltime fish culturists and one seasonal helper go about their daily routine. On a typical day, there are few cars other than those of the hatchery employees with the day-to-day activities most often going unnoticed to passers by.

At the same time, within minutes of the hatchery, steelhead season is in full swing along the Erie tributaries, and thousands of anglers have arrived in the area from all over the country. These eager anglers are willing to fish, often in overly crowded tributaries and the Erie lakeshore, for the chance to hook a steelhead, one of the most sought-after freshwater game fish in the world, not to mention the bragging rights of having experienced the internationally famous "Steelhead Alley." During warmer weather, anglers take to Lake Erie for these fighters for the chance to hear their reel drags scream and experience what many have called the freshwater answer to deep-sea fishing.

Some of these eager anglers are often incorrectly informed about where all of Lake Erie's steelhead come from. Many believe that the fish reproduce naturally in the lake and its tributaries. Most anglers know that the vast majority of the steelhead trout are raised and stocked with very little natural reproduction occurring.

All of Lake Erie's steelhead trout begin their lives quietly and in the shadows of the Fairview State Fish Hatchery. Most anglers are unaware of the lengthy process and expense involved to spawn, raise and stock these fish, nor are they aware that the entire process, regardless of where the "smolts" (newborn steelhead) are raised, starts at the Fairview State Fish Hatchery assisted by the Linesville and Tionesta State Fish hatcheries.

The cost of all of this is funded by your license dollars. Local sportsmen's clubs and cooperative nurseries graciously supplement the raising of additional fish in private hatcheries and raceways. In cooperation with the Fish & Boat Commission, they use fertilized and processed steelhead eggs and fry provided by the Commission.

The steelhead's path of "cradle to lake" is a complex and closely monitored process that begins at the Trout Run Nursery Waters where PA Route 98 in Fairview ends at Lake Erie. The Fish & Boat Commission closely controls, monitors and stocks this tributary for the specific purpose of raising brood stock that can be easily handled by hatchery employees. The area is off limits to public fishing and closely protected by Commission law enforcement officers. The sight is a popular public viewing area for both young and old to see these spectacular fish up close and in large numbers.

Typically, Commission employees take brood stock from these nursery waters beginning in late November, continuing about every two weeks depending on the weather and water conditions. This live harvest process continues as late as February until local hatchery employees have collected enough steelhead to process the eggs and milt necessary to meet annual stocking requirements. The brood stock are confined to a small area at the mouth of Trout

Run. An adjustable dam, or "weir," is used to control the upstream movement of the fish until enough steelhead are taken for spawning. Fish are transported to the Fairview Hatchery in state stocking trucks and tank trailers. After completing this collection process, the Commission opens the weir, allowing the fish to move upstream freely.

When the brood stock arrive at the Fairview Hatchery, and before milking, the fish are injected with an antibiotic. This measure prevents a variety of coldwater diseases with no ill effects on human consumption. Fish are then anesthetized before milking to make the process less stressful on the fish and to ease handling. The steelhead eggs are then fertilized, or "spawned," and disinfected with iodine, which is also harmless to human consumption.



photo: David J. Rottigel

Steelhead fishing on Elk Creek, Erie County, with PA-bred and raised fish.

The spawned steelhead are then carefully returned to the tributaries, often spread out upstream. This practice provides additional angling opportunities and helps alleviate the congestion at the Trout Run Nursery Waters. Most fish eventually make their way back to Lake Erie, depending on their age and winter weather conditions.

The Commission then packages the fertilized eggs for transport to the Tionesta and Linesville hatcheries. There the Commission incubates the eggs for hatching. Hatching and raising the fry begins in the hatch house. The Commission moves the small fingerlings outside as soon as raceway space becomes available from having stocked the large fingerlings from the previous year class.

The Commission's annual steelhead production is usually more than 1 million fish with some 650,000 raised at the Tionesta hatchery, 100,000 at the Linesville hatchery, and 300,000 at the Fairview hatchery. Fish are graded as they grow. The faster-growing steelhead are separated from the slower-growing fish to help maintain size consistency. Trained fish culturists carefully monitor these small fish. Fish & Boat Commission biologists oversee the process to ensure a successful hatch and the healthiest fish possible.

The spring-fed raceways are shaded to slow algae growth. They're also covered with netting to fend off birds and other predators. Hatchery employees are on duty seven days a week (including holidays) and on call 24 hours a day in case of an emergency. The hungry fry require feeding four times a day at first, and as they grow the feedings lessen to twice a day. Water temperature and quality require constant monitoring to help ensure maximum yield. In addition to the perpetual responsibility of raising these fish, hatchery employees are responsible for maintaining most of the building and grounds, cleaning the raceways, maintaining equipment and all the required paperwork, record-keeping and other documentation that this enormous project requires.

Once the fish reach stocking, or smolt, size, the steelhead are then transported and stocked with specific stocking numbers for each Erie tributary and Presque Isle Bay. These stocking numbers are determined by rate of return, angling pressure and fishing access. The young steelhead will instinctively "imprint" themselves to the specific tributary into which they are released, and in the fall, most will return to their "home" tributaries. Once reaching maturity, many of the fish that return to the Trout Run Nursery Waters will be live-harvested for milking, and the cycle of life begins again.

Salmon have been raised in the Erie area since the late 1960s when fish were raised in small ponds and raceways along Walnut Creek. Later they were replaced by steelhead because they provide more fishing opportunities over a much longer period. The Fairview State Fish Hatchery was built in 1976 and has become the sole source for fertilized steelhead eggs.

Now you know where these fish come from!

Visit the Hatchery

The Fairview State Fish Hatchery is located just west of PA Route 98 off of PA Route 5 at 2000 Lohrer Road, Fairview, PA 16415. The hatchery is open to the public during regular business hours Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Small tours are welcome and can be arranged by calling the hatchery at 814-474-1514. Visit the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us** for more information on hatcheries, fish, fish culture and fishing.

The Snapping

by Andrew L. Shiels

Turtles are members of the Class Reptilia, Order Testudinata. They are the oldest living reptiles, having evolved more than 200 million years ago.

Turtles have adapted to a variety of environments including marine, estuarine, freshwater and terrestrial habitats. They are found on every continent except Antarctica. Although their habitats may differ, all turtles share these same characteristics: 1) a shell, 2) they lay eggs, and 3) they build nests on land to incubate their eggs.

The most unique feature of a turtle is its shell. The shell's shape, color and pattern make it a readily used feature for species identification. The shell is divided into an upper part, the carapace, and a lower part, the plastron. Both carapace and plastron are covered with scales called scutes. In addition to using the shell as an identifier, the plastron's shape can be used in sex determination. In many species male turtles have a concave plastron; female turtles have a flat plastron.

Most Pennsylvania turtles are active from April to October, spending the remaining portion of the year hibernating in burrows, in the mud, on the bottom of streams or ponds, or under piles of vegetation. Normal daily activities include basking in the sun, foraging for food and resting. The majority of turtles are diurnal (active during daylight hours). However, mud turtles, musk turtles and snapping turtles are primarily nocturnal (active at night). Most turtles are omnivorous—they feed on a wide variety of foods including insects, fish, small mammals, carrion, berries, aquatic vegetation and plants.

Turtles vary in size from species that are several inches in length to those that are over 6 feet (sea turtles and giant tortoises). The common snapping turtle is the largest Pennsylvania turtle. Adult snappers can reach a shell length of 12 inches and typically weigh between 15 and 45 pounds.

Not only can they reach outstanding weights, but turtles also live longer than most other vertebrates. Some box turtles have had recorded life spans of longer than a century. Generally, however, most Pennsylvania turtles live 20 to 40 years.

In Pennsylvania, there are four turtle families comprising 12 genera and 15 species and subspecies. The families are grouped into snapping turtles; musk and mud turtles; pond, marsh and box turtles; and softshell turtles

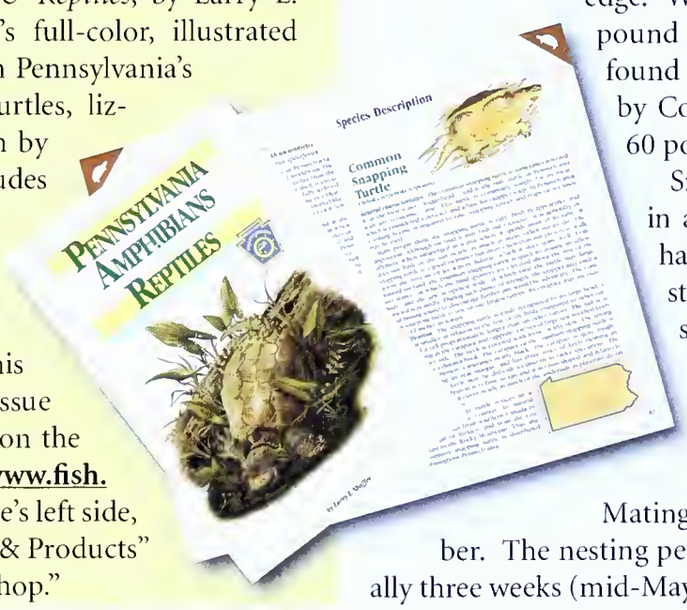
Snapping turtles, or "snappers," are large freshwater turtles with a posterior serrated carapace reaching lengths of 12 inches The carapace varies from tan, brown or olive to black. The plastron is yellowish to tan and greatly reduced in size. The head is large with massive jaws. The common snapper has a long tail with three triangular plates. Males usually have longer tails than females with the male cloacal opening (anus) located beyond the margin of the top shell. In females, the cloaca does not extend beyond the shell edge. Weights average in the 15- to 45-pound range. An exceptional snapper found in Wayne County was weighed by Commission staff in 2006 at over 60 pounds.

Snapping turtles have been found in almost every kind of freshwater habitat in their range. They prefer still or slow-moving water with soft mud or sand bottoms and abundant vegetation. Snapping turtles can also be found in brackish coastal waters. Snapping turtles range statewide.

Mating occurs from March to November. The nesting period for snapping turtles is usually three weeks (mid-May to mid-June). Snapping turtles

For more information

Pennsylvania Amphibians & Reptiles, by Larry L. Shaffer, is the Commission's full-color, illustrated book that provides details on Pennsylvania's salamanders, frogs, toads, turtles, lizards and snakes. The 6-inch by 9-inch, 166-page book includes each animals' characteristics, identification, range, habitat description, reproduction habits, and food requirements. To order this book, see the form in this issue on page 62, or order online on the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**. On the main page's left side, hold your cursor over "Pubs. & Products" and click on "The Outdoor Shop."



TURTLE

dig nests in loose sand, loam, railroad beds, plant debris or sawdust piles. Clutch sizes may vary from six to 100 eggs in each nest, but individual snappers usually lay 25 to 50 eggs. The incubation period depends on temperature, usually requiring 60 to 90 days.

As the name "snapping" turtle suggests, this species uses it powerful jaws to capture prey and defend itself if provoked. However, they will usually attempt to flee if disturbed. Snapping turtles are one of the most aquatic turtle species, spending a majority of their time resting on the bottom of deep pools or buried in the mud in shallow water with their eyes and nostrils exposed. During the day they can be seen floating just beneath the water's surface with only eyes and nostrils protruding.

Throughout their range, snapping turtles are hunted for food for personal consumption or the restaurant trade. They are often killed because they are mistakenly believed to be major predators of young waterfowl. Indeed, snapping turtles are opportunists and will consume many types of food, both plant and animal. However, snapping turtles are important scavengers of dead and decomposing aquatic animals. Research has shown that 80 percent or more of their diet typically consists of aquatic vegetation such as duckweed.

Adult snappers can reach a shell length of 12 inches and typically weigh between 15 and 45 pounds.



illustration-Tom Duran Jr.

2007 PFBC Photography Contest

Entry Deadline: December 31, 2007

The 2007 Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Photography Contest is intended to foster a greater appreciation for Pennsylvania's fishing and boating, and aquatic resources.

Contest winners will receive a certificate, the limited-edition magazine 75th anniversary patches, and the limited-edition 2007 nongame species patch. Honorable mention winners will receive a certificate and the limited-edition year 2007 nongame species patch.

The contest now includes a "best in show" selection from all category first-place winners. The best in show winner receives a framed 1991 trout stamp poster. The Commission began issuing trout/salmon stamps in 1991.

Winning entries and honorable mentions may appear in a contest feature article in a future issue of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater*. All entries may also be used elsewhere in the magazine, on the magazine's cover, in Commission publications, on the Commission's web site, and in Commission exhibits and other projects.

The contest will run from March 2007 through December 2007.

View the results of the 2006 contest by clicking the contest link on the Commission web site's main page, at **www.fish.state.pa.us**.

RULES

- The contest is open to amateur photographers (anyone who makes less than half one's annual income from taking and/or selling photographs).
- Commission employees and volunteers and their immediate family members are not eligible.
- Entries must be original works taken in Pennsylvania, on waterways with public access, and they must have been taken by the person entering the contest.
- Entries must also show adherence to Pennsylvania fishing and boating laws and regulations.
- In photographs, all boaters and anglers in boats must be wearing properly fitted, buttoned and zipped life jackets. It's encouraged that children on shore near the water should wear life jackets.
- Entrants are responsible for securing photo releases from identifiable subjects.
- Entrants may submit only mounted 35mm color slides, color prints in sizes 3 1/2"x5", 4"x6", 5"x7", or 8"x10", or unmounted medium-format and large-format transparencies.
- All submissions must be in color–no black-and-white photos.
- No mounted, over-matted, framed or glassed prints will be accepted.
- Retouched or electronically manipulated entries are not allowed.
- Please do not send negatives or digital files.
- Each photo must include the entrant's name, address, phone number, location of the photograph including county, species identification (if applicable), and category, in addition to a fully completed official entry form on this page for each category entered.
- Multiple submissions are allowed, but participants are limited to a total of two entries per category.
- The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission shall have the right to digitize and use all submissions for publishing, illustration, World Wide Web display, advertising, trade, exhibits and promotion, and in any other use in any medium for any purpose whatsoever without compensation.
- Winning entries (1st, 2nd or 3rd place) from previous Commission photography contests are not eligible.
- Entrants who want their materials returned must include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with the right amount of postage and appropriate packaging to safeguard materials. ***Submissions that do not include return envelopes and postage will not be returned.***

Photo Contest Entry Form

www.fish.state.pa.us

Complete this form with each entry and mail to: PFBC Photo Contest, PA Fish & Boat Commission, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000. The deadline for the Commission's receiving entries is December 31, 2007.

Please Print Clearly

Entrant's Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail (if available): _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Categories

- ❑ 1. Seasonal Fishing and/or Boating (main focus on activity with seasonal backgrounds (snow, ice, fall leaves, etc.)
- ❑ 2. Family Fishing and/or Boating (emphasis on two or more family members)
- ❑ 3. Young Anglers and/or Boaters (photos of anglers and/or boaters less than 12 years of age)
- ❑ 4. Waterway Scenics (Impoundments) (lakes, ponds and reservoirs)
- ❑ 5. Waterway Scenics (Flowing Waters) (rivers, streams and creeks)
- ❑ 6. Reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates (animal closeups or photos with the animals as the primary subject)

I received this form from (check one):

- ❑ *PA&B* magazine
- ❑ the Commission's web site
- ❑ Photo dealer
- ❑ Other (specify) _____

This form may be photocopied.

Dedicated to the Memory of Commissioner Enoch S. "Inky" Moore Jr.

PLAY

Summer 2007

Pennsylvania • League • of • Angling • Youth

Let's Look at Largemouth

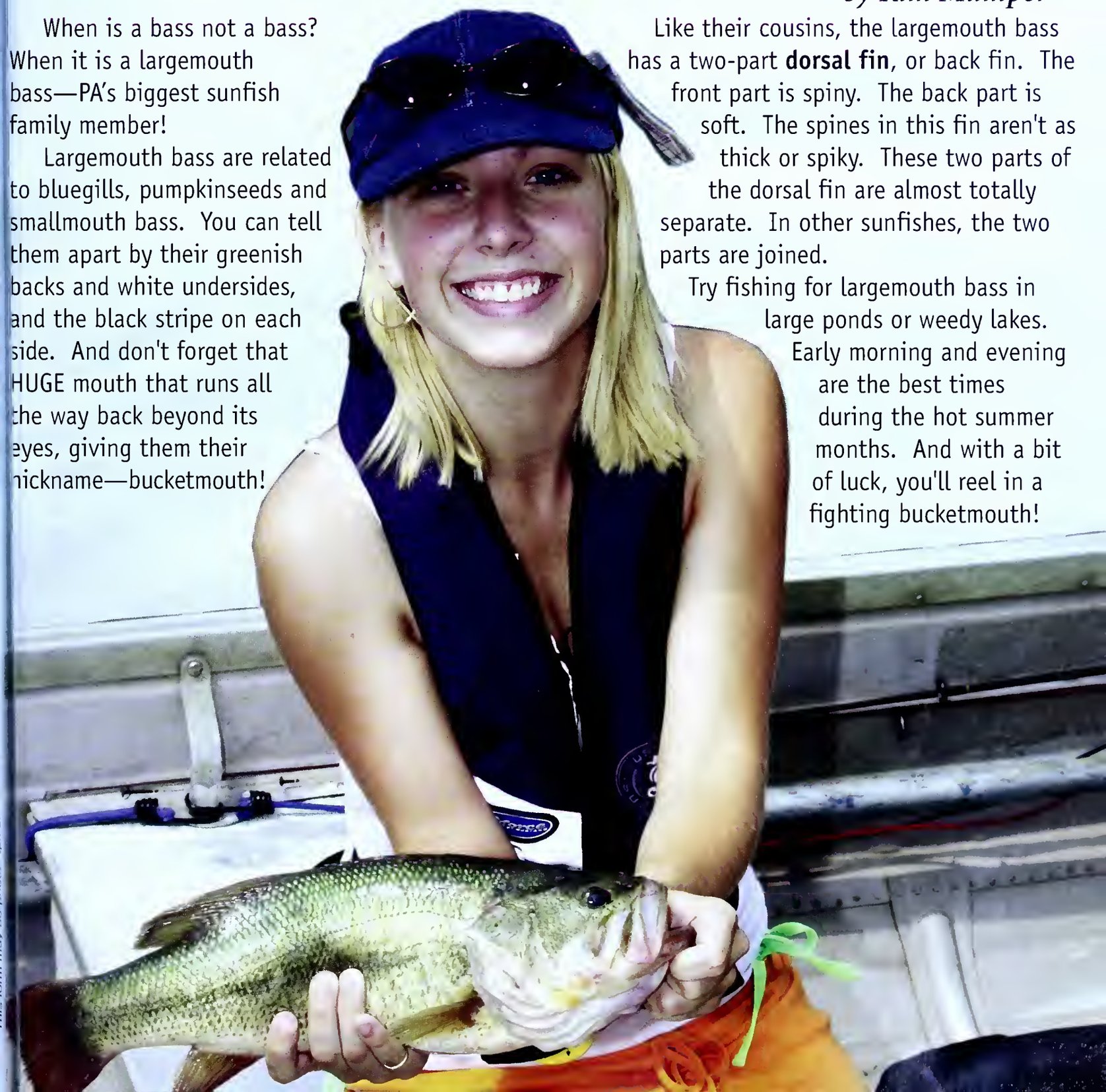
by Kim Mumper

When is a bass not a bass? When it is a largemouth bass—PA's biggest sunfish family member!

Largemouth bass are related to bluegills, pumpkinseeds and smallmouth bass. You can tell them apart by their greenish backs and white undersides, and the black stripe on each side. And don't forget that HUGE mouth that runs all the way back beyond its eyes, giving them their nickname—bucketmouth!

Like their cousins, the largemouth bass has a two-part **dorsal fin**, or back fin. The front part is spiny. The back part is soft. The spines in this fin aren't as thick or spiky. These two parts of the dorsal fin are almost totally separate. In other sunfishes, the two parts are joined.

Try fishing for largemouth bass in large ponds or weedy lakes. Early morning and evening are the best times during the hot summer months. And with a bit of luck, you'll reel in a fighting bucketmouth!

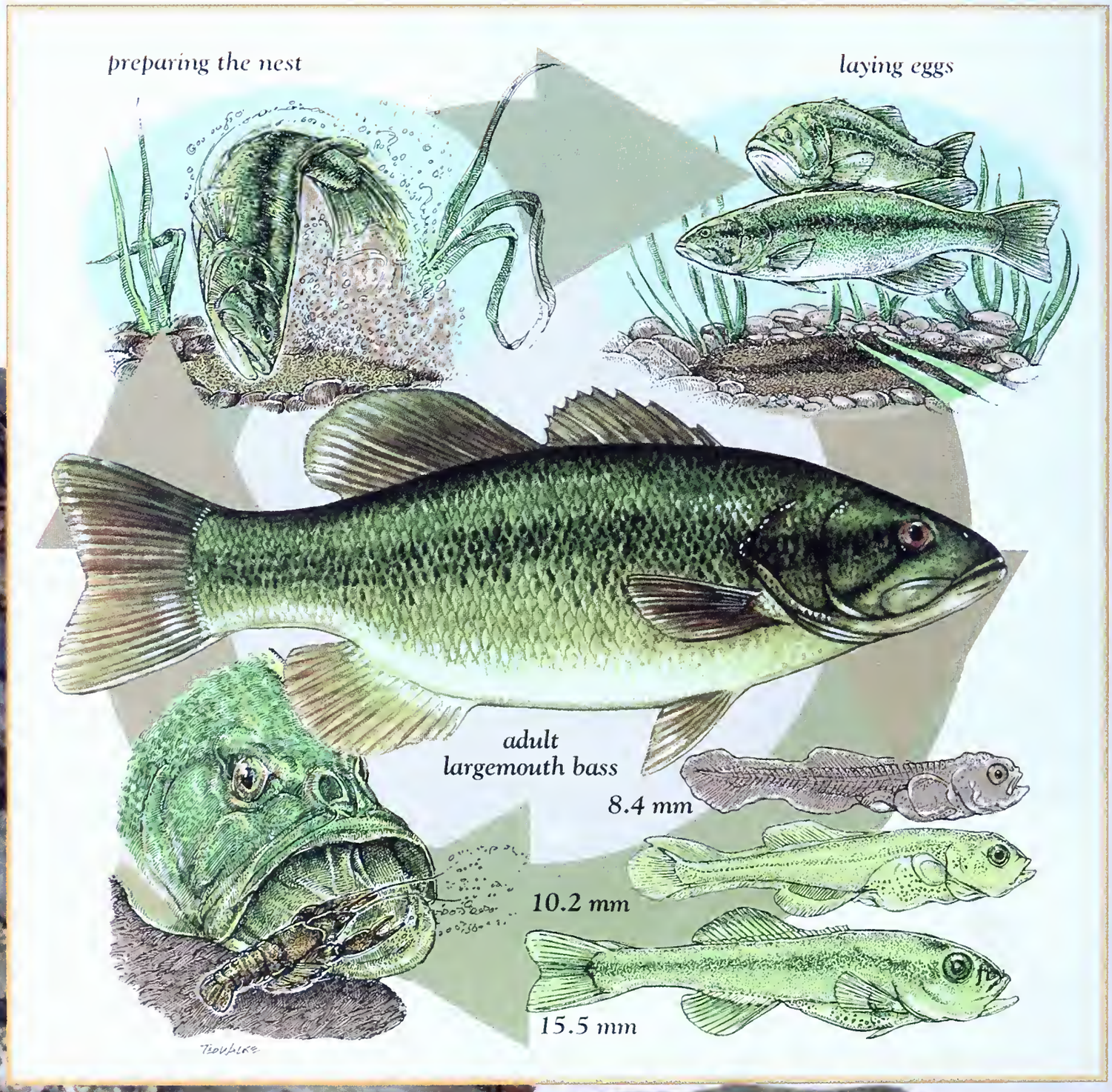


Watery Nest-Builders

You may think of birds as the nest-builders in the animal kingdom, but many fish also build nests. Like all sunfish, largemouth bass are nest-builders. Male fish fan the bottom with their tails to form a circular "nest." Nests are 2 to 3 feet across, 6 inches deep, and in water 1 to 4 feet deep. They are about 20 feet apart and within 8 feet from shore.

Largemouth bass **spawn** (lay their eggs) in the spring and early summer. Several females may spawn on more than one nest and each may lay as many as 20,000 eggs! The males defend the nests—the eggs, and then the fry—from predators. The eggs hatch in about 10 days. Not all these **fry** (baby fish) survive. Fish and other aquatic animals feed on the young.

So look for sunfish nests in the lakes and ponds where you live in spring and summer!



Is it a Largemouth Bass?

Bass (Sunfish Species)

Largemouth Bass
Micropterus salmoides



Smallmouth Bass
Micropterus dolomieui



Spotted Bass
Micropterus punctulatus



See the *Pennsylvania Fishing Summary* for seasons, sizes and creel limits for these species.

Identification

Largemouth bass has bright-green to olive-green head and back; sides are lighter green; usually has a broad black stripe or line of broken splotches running along the sides from head to tail; belly is white or pale yellow. Dorsal fin sections are deeply notched and nearly separated.



Upper jaw extends beyond the back edge of the eye.

Identification cont.

Smallmouth bass has brownish to bronze cast to its back, shading to lighter hues on the sides with dark, vertical bars on sides; belly is white or pale yellow. Dorsal fin sections are separated by a shallow notch.



Upper jaw does not extend beyond the back edge of the eye.

Spotted bass has light to dark olive-green back with silvery green sides and diamond-shaped spots on its sides above a splotchy dark band that runs from head to tail. Scales below the band have black bases that form a pattern of horizontal small spots.



Upper jaw does not extend beyond the rear portion of the eye.

For more information about largemouth bass and their place in the sunfish family, enter this address into your browser: **http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/pafish/fishhtms/chap22.htm**.

To Catch a Bass



Bass are bigger and feistier than many of the other fish you'll find in a pond, lake or river, so be prepared for some big fun! Check your gear to make sure you can handle these big fish.

Make sure you have 6- to 14-pound-test line on your reel. Lighter line won't cut it. And you'll want a size 3/0 to 4/0 hook.

Largemouth bass are **predators**. That means they hunt and eat other animals. So use imitations of their **prey** (the animals they eat) as bait. Largemouth bass really go for frogs, nightcrawlers, crayfish, minnows and leeches. In the summer you can find lots of these critters around your yard or nearby waterway.

Artificial lures work great, too. Use imitations of any of the live baits. You can get a bass's attention with jigs, diving crankbaits, floating lures and poppers. Use these offerings in 1/16-ounce to 1-ounce sizes.

Whether you use live bait or a lure, or search a pond, lake or river, you are sure to have a great time fishing for largemouth bass!



Big Summer Bass!

Across

3. Use this live amphibian for bait, or use a lure that looks like it.
4. A very good description of PA's biggest sun fish: _____ bass.
5. This fish family includes bluegills, pumpkinseeds and the largemouth bass.
6. Where a sunfish lays its eggs.
8. An animal that hunts and eats other animals.
9. A good nickname for a largemouth bass.

Down

1. This is found on the back of a fish (2 words).
2. Where an animal lives; for a largemouth bass, ponds and lakes.
7. Largemouth bass have a black one on their sides.







Down: 1. dorsal fin; 2. habitat; 7. stripe

Boats and Bass

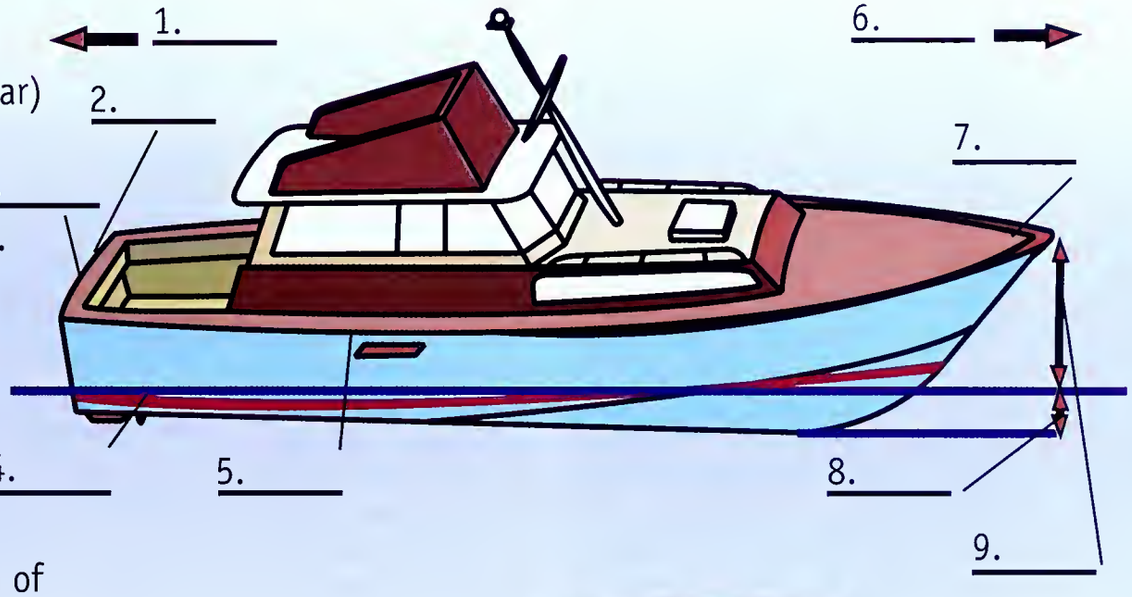
It's fun to fish from a dock or from the shore for largemouth bass—or any fish. But you can reach more fish if you have a boat!

You don't need a fancy boat. A small rowboat, kayak or canoe will work well to get you to the fish in a pond or small lake. Some people have john boats—a flat-bottomed boat with a small outboard motor—and they work great! According to boating regulations, kids 11 years old and younger may not operate a boat with a motor greater the 25 horsepower, and kids 12 years old and over must have a Boating Safety Education Certificate before operating a boat with a motor that's greater than 25 horsepower. Anyone can operate a boat with a motor of 25 horsepower or less. To find approved boating education courses in your area, visit the Fish & Boat Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**. Before you go, make sure you know how to operate your boat properly. Always have an adult go with you and always wear your life jacket—it's the law if you are 12 years old or younger!



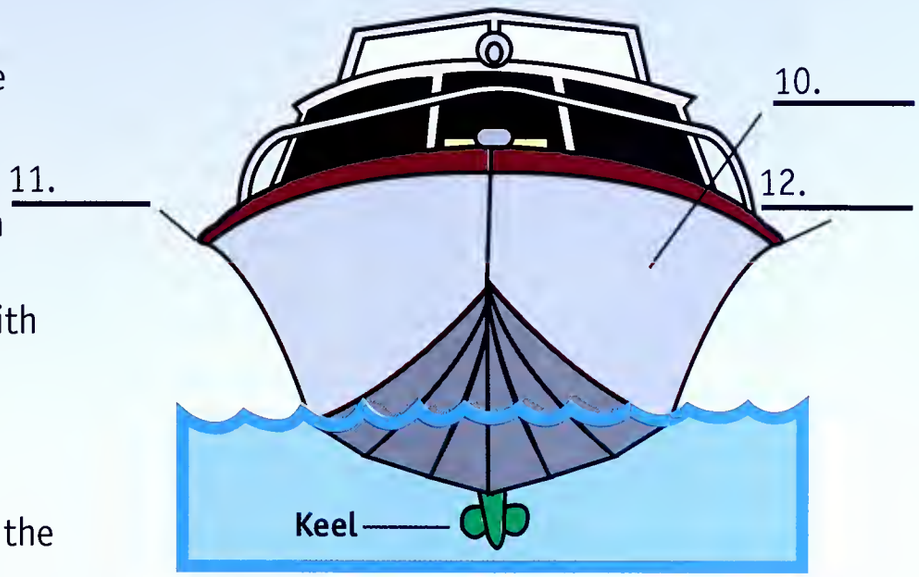
What's What in Your Boat

Write the letter of the definition below on the line next to the the correct part/direction of the boat.



Boat Parts

A. **Stern** - the after (back or rear) portion of the boat.
B. **Bow** - the forward part (toward the front) of a boat.
C. **Draft** - the vertical distance from the water line to the lowest point of the keel; the minimum deph of water in which a vessel will float.
D. **Waterline** - the intersection of a boat's hull and the water's surface.
E. **Freeboard** - the vertical distance from the waterline to the gunwale.
F. **Hull** - the structural body of the boat
G. **Transom** - the transverse part of the stern (where an outboard motor is attached).
H. **Gunwales** (pronounced gun-uls, rhymes with tunnels) - the upper edge of the side of a boat



Directional Words

I. **Forward** - aboard a boat, the direction to the front, to the bow
J. **Starboard** - the right side of the boat
K. **Aft** - near or at the stern of the boat
L. **Port** - the left side of the boat

For more on boating, enter this address into your browser:
http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/boatcrs/03boathandbook/intro6.htm.

Answers: 1. K; 2. G; 3. A; 4. D; 5. H; 6. I; 7. B; 8. C; 9. E; 10. F; 11. J; 12. L



PLAY
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Photos: Spring Gearhart and Art Michaels
Layout and design: Spring Gearhart
PLAY Subscriptions: Jean Davis and Marty Miller
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Commission Actions Improve Public Access

At its spring quarterly meeting, held April 15-17 in Harrisburg, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission took action to improve public access for recreational anglers and boaters. Among the action geared toward public access was the acquisition of two fishing easements in Erie County. The Commission opted to secure an easement on more than 2,350 linear feet of Crooked Creek as it flows across a parcel of property in Springfield Township, Erie County. The easement will be for public fishing, boating and riparian and fishery management and will include the stream corridor and extend at least 29 feet back from the top of the bank. In addition to the fishing easement, an additional easement for parking and a path from the parking area to the creek will be secured. The easement is located along the south side of PA Route 5 and extends south along the creek. Crooked Creek upstream from this area received several trout stockings in 2006, and the acquisition of these rights will provide additional trout fishing opportunities.

The Commission also voted to secure a property easement along and over a portion of Walnut Creek. Walnut Creek provides significant steelhead fishing opportunities. The property is also popular because of its nearness to the Commission's Walnut Creek Marina (roughly 1/3-mile south).

In both instances, the easement acquisition funding comes from the sale of the special Lake Erie fishing permits. The Commission has identified ensuring access to the state's waterways as critical for the long-term future of fishing and boating.

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission also accepted a donation of a 1.3-acre tract of land along French Creek north of the Utica bridge in Venango County. The tract is between an active rail line and the creek and has roughly 700 feet of creek frontage. The property will be conveyed from the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

The Commission also took action to approve financial support for two boating access sites. The Commission approved a grant of up to $113,000 that will assist Bridgewater Borough, Beaver County, with its plans to convert a 12-acre brownfield along the Ohio River into a public riverfront park. The park will include a boat dock for transient boaters. The boat dock will be ADA-accessible. Grant funds will also be used for site grading and landscaping and for the installation of lights and signs.



photo-Scott Bollinger

A grant was approved for Columbia Borough, Lancaster County to replace the old two-lane plank launch ramp with a new three-lane concrete ramp that will include a bulkhead and courtesy docks.

A similar grant was approved for Columbia Borough, Lancaster County, which is revitalizing its Columbia Borough River Park. The borough's master plan for the site calls for replacing the old two-lane plank launch ramp with a new three-lane concrete ramp that will include a bulkhead and courtesy docks. Using a Commission grant, the borough will repave the parking area and expand it to create space for additional vehicles with trailers. The borough will reconstruct the access road to provide a traffic loop through the facility that alleviates some of the congestion that occurs with the current single-lane access road.

In other action, the Commission:

- Approved a new fee schedule for the issuance of Scientific Collectors Permits.
- Agreed to lease a portion of its Opossum Lake, Cumberland County, property to Lower Frankford Township.
- Revised its list of Wild Trout Stream sections.
- Added a 2.75-mile section of Tannery Hollow Run, Cameron County, to the list of Class A Wild Trout Waters.
- Moved to add North Park Lake, Allegheny County, to the Big Bass Special Regulations Program, effective January 1, 2008.
- Proposed amended fishing regulations pertaining to seasons, sizes and creel limits for fish and mussels of Conowingo Reservoir to correlate Pennsylvania's regulations with those of Maryland.
- In a similar move, seasons, sizes and creel limits were also proposed to be adjusted for black bass, muskellunge (and hybrids) and river herring to make regulations on the Delaware River more uniform among Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey.
- Approved issuing a sub-surface easement to Beaver County for the installation of fiber optic cables along the Commission's New Brighton Access Area.
- Proposed to establish a minimum size limit of 14 inches for tautog imported into Pennsylvania for sale in fish markets.
- Exchanged small property rights with an adjacent landowner at Canonsburg Lake, Washington County.

A complete copy of the meeting agenda can be found on the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us. On the left side of the web site's main page hold your cursor over "About the PFBC" and in the drop-down menu navigate to "Agendas & Minutes."

WCO Alan D. Robinson Named 2006 Officer of the Year

Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) Alan D. Robinson was named the 2006 Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's Officer of the Year. He received the honor in April during the 62nd Northeast Fish & Wildlife Conference's annual meeting in Connecticut.



photo-Art Michaels

WCO Alan D. Robinson was named the Fish & Boat Commission 2006 Officer of the Year during the 62nd Northeast Fish & Wildlife Conference's annual meeting in Connecticut, last April.

WCO Robinson has served 19 years with the Fish & Boat Commission, mainly in the Northern Huntingdon/Mifflin County district.

Fish & Boat Commission Bureau of Law Enforcement Director Tom Kamerzel said, "Robinson maintains a well-rounded law enforcement and public relations program in his district and proudly and professionally represents the Commission while performing his varied duties." In 2006, Robinson prosecuted eight boating-under-the-influence (BUI) violations and assisted other officers in four other BUI cases. Robinson's court case administration resulted in the creation of strong county court case law supporting officers conducting safety equipment inspections at accesses and other areas.

WCO Robinson received a Commission Lifesaving Award in 2004, and in 1999 and 2006 he received the Commission BUI "Top Gun" Award. In 1999 he was also nominated as the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators Boating Law Enforcement Officer of the Year.

Valley Creek Restoration

The Valley Creek Trustee Council, consisting of the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission and the Valley Forge National Historical Park, has announced the availability of a new grant program for restoration of natural resources in the Valley Creek Watershed.

Valley Creek is an Exceptional Value stream and a Class A wild trout fishery. After contamination of the stream occurred in the mid-1980s, funds to compensate for natural resource damages and lost angler use were received through legal settlements with the responsible parties and placed into a restoration fund administered by the Valley Creek Trustee Council. About $1.5 million is now available through the Valley Creek Restoration Grant Program for qualifying stream restoration projects.

The grant program is based on the Valley Creek Restoration Plan, which outlines the strategy for watershed restoration and provides potential restoration projects. Qualified projects must relate to stormwater management, streambank stabilization, implementation of environmentally sensitive land practices, projects that directly improve angler access and projects related to the restoration of brook trout in Crabby Creek, a tributary to Valley Creek. Applications will be accepted until October 31 of each year for projects to be implemented the following year. Anyone is eligible to apply.

For additional information on the Valley Creek Restoration Grant Program, the Valley Creek Trustee Council and the Valley Creek Watershed, visit www.savevalleycreek.org. Copies of the Valley Creek Restoration Plan are also available on the web site or in CD form from Chuck Marshall, Valley Creek Restoration Coordinator, at cgmarshall@nni.com or 610-647-6432.

SAVED BY THE JACKET

We've Owned a Boat for Years

For years we have owned a boat. I haven't always been faithful about wearing a life jacket, contrary to my husband's prompting. I don't swim, and I have a fear of the water.

We always have a 4th of July party with a canoe trip down a river near us. Most years, the river is fairly shallow, and it is quite tame with no rapids to contend with. One year, with a drought, we were concerned we would not be able to have our traditional trip because we thought the river wouldn't be deep enough.

Because of my husband's urging, we both wore life jackets despite the heat. As often happens when you have a lot of people gathered together, a water fight started. Our canoe was tipped over in the process. To everyone's surprise, the water was well over our heads. Everyone was scurrying to save a wallet and watch from washing down the river. Our canoe was also a concern, and we took great care to keep it from sinking.

Unnoticed, I was swept down the river with the current. It all happened so fast, no one had time to react to a possible disaster. The jacket kept my head above the water, but I still panicked. Had I not been wearing a life jacket, I don't think I would be here writing this. I wore a Type III PFD, which I believe saved my life. My husband no longer needs to badger me about wearing a life jacket. I won't go near the water without wearing one.—*Dawn Banczak.*



Day of Firsts for Tylersville

April 5, 2007, isn't a date that denotes a new year on any modern calendar, but for the Tylersville State Fish Hatchery it was a day that signified the beginning of a new era. Officials of the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) gathered in Clinton County recently to convey the station officially from federal to state ownership. The day was doubly significant because new, state-of-the-art water treatment equipment went online there officially.

The Tylersville hatchery was originally constructed in 1963 by the USFWS and was closed in 1977. In 1984, the Commission entered into a lease agreement with the USFWS to maintain and operate the facility. Producing some 261,000 pounds of adult trout each year, the facility provides about 13 percent of the adult trout stocked statewide by the Commission. Recognizing the importance of the facility to Pennsylvania and the to Commission's desire to make significant infrastructure upgrades to it, the two agencies in 2006 jointly supported federal legislation to transfer ownership of the Tylersville hatchery to the Commonwealth. That act of Congress reached fruition with the formal conveyance in a brief ceremony at the hatchery.

"We've been pleased to be able to keep this hatchery in production through our longstanding partnership with the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission. In conveying ownership of the hatchery to the Commonwealth for its permanent operation, we know it's in good hands," said Rick Bennett, deputy director for the Service's Northeast Region.

In taking ownership of the hatchery, Commission Executive Director Doug Austen noted that the two agencies had long maintained a good working relationship at the facility, a partnership that is expected to continue. "Having the hatchery in state hands provides assurances about moving forward. This facility is a key component in supporting Pennsylvania's recreational trout fishing opportunities and the economic activity that trout fishing provides, especially to rural Pennsylvania," Austen said.

The hatchery is located on 125 total acres with 5,000 feet of concrete raceways. The water supply for the facility is a spring pool and sub-surface flow that originates from Big Fishing Creek. Buildings include a hatch house/administrative office complex, maintenance garage/employee quarters building, and a pole building for vehicle storage.

The facility's newest building includes state-of-the-art water treatment equipment—$1.7 million in pipes, pumps, controls and filters. The project was made possible through funds from Growing Greener II, a voter-approved plan that is investing $625 million in environmental programs across Pennsylvania. Included in this legislation is an allotment of $27.5 million for facilities such as Tylersville that the Commission manages.

Fishin' from the Kitchen

Grilled Smallmouth Bass

by Wayne Phillips

Foil packets of smallmouth bass cooked on a grill result in a cool kitchen and satisfied diners.



photo-Wayne Phillips

Ingredients for four servings:

- ✔ Boneless, skinless smallmouth bass fillets for 4
- ✔ 2 fennel bulbs, thinly sliced
- ✔ 2 red onions, thinly sliced
- ✔ 2 oranges, zest and sections
- ✔ Juice from two oranges
- ✔ Butter
- ✔ Extra virgin olive oil
- ✔ Salt and white pepper to taste
- ✔ Aluminum foil

Procedure

Place one piece of aluminum foil on top of another. Drizzle a bit of olive oil on the foil. Scatter fennel and red onion slices on the foil. Top with pieces of smallmouth bass. Season with salt and white pepper. Scatter orange zest over fish and vegetables. Dot with butter. Cut the peel off the orange and remove each section so there is no pith (the white part). Reserve the sections. Squeeze the remaining orange pieces over the fish. Wrap the foil tightly and crimp the edges as tightly as possible. Place on a medium grill. Once the packet puffs up, it will take only a few minutes to finish cooking.

Note that double wrapping your fish in foil keeps it moist and prevents burning. Keep the dull side of the foil on the outside. Pinch the foil seams as tightly as possible. This keeps steam inside, aiding the cooking process and keeping the fish moist. Cook fish over medium heat on a grill or in a 350-degree oven. As the packets cook, they will fill with steam and puff up. You can add a couple of tablespoons of white wine to the foil packets if you wish.

Serve

Place a bed of fennel, red onions and orange sections on each plate. Top with fish. Garnish with orange zest and fennel fronds.


Tylersville State Fish Hatchery

photo-Art Michaels

"The microscreen filters and associated storage tank, pumps, electrical controls and improvements to hatchery operations represent a significant financial commitment by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission. These hatchery upgrades will ensure that the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission continues to provide recreational fishing opportunities while maintaining high water quality standards and minimizing impacts to receiving streams," Austen noted.

The installation of the treatment system was completed in late 2006 and has been tested throughout the winter, a critical time with the hatchery's highest concentration of fish. The initial results have been encouraging. In fact, during the testing period the water exiting the hatchery into nearby Fishing Creek was often a higher quality than what was flowing into it.

"Simply put, the technology is doing what we designed it to do: Minimize the impact on aquatic resources," Austen said. "Our philosophy in operating hatcheries is to produce the highest-quality fish possible to support recreational angling and do it in a sustainable and environmentally responsible manner. As a natural resource agency, we are committed not just to meeting mandated standards, but also to leading by example."

Toward that objective, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission has a similar treatment upgrade underway at its Pleasant Gap State Fish Hatchery in Centre County and will be moving forward at Huntsdale State Fish Hatchery in Cumberland County. In all, the Commission intends to invest $23.5 million worth of Growing Greener II funding into nine state hatchery projects.

Angler's Notebook by Jerry Bush

Try jigging soft tube baits when fishing for bass in clear water or when fish seem inactive. These offerings are especially effective when dropped into weed pockets and other structure known to hold bass, because they can be left motionless to tease hesitant fish.


photo-Jerry Bush

The plastic worm is probably one of the most effective lures ever used to catch largemouth bass. Unfortunately, it's also one of the most misused baits. Worms crawl, and anglers will do well to fish worm imitations that way.

Too many anglers ignore tiny nibbles, waiting for baits to be hammered before assuming that a fish is interested in the offering. When in doubt, set the hook. Bass fishing is not baseball, and you will not be called out for a swing and a miss.

Would you like your boat to have a little more get-up and go? A new prop may be just what you need, but there are many factors to consider. Pitch, diameter, cup, angle, number of blades, motor design, horsepower, materials, and the particulars of your boat affect prop performance. The best way to determine your needs is to make arrangements with your boat dealer to test three or four different props.

An expensive console-mounted GPS unit isn't practical for canoe and kayak use. However, inexpensive hand-held GPS units can be used just as effectively to mark favorite fishing holes. They also serve multiple duties as wayfinders during hikes and road trips.

World Youth Fly-Fishing Championship

A stream considered by many to be among the top trout waters in Pennsylvania is one of four area venues selected for the 6th Annual World Youth Fly-Fishing Championship (Federation Internationale de Peche Sportive Mouche, the International Federation of Sport Fly Fishing), slated for August 3 to 10.

Fishing Creek, in Clinton and Centre counties, the Little Juniata River and Lake Perez, both in Huntingdon County, and Spring Creek, in Centre County, are the venues selected for this year's competition.

This is the first time the United States has hosted the championship.

An estimated 60 to 100 young fly-fishers from around the world, ranging from 13 to 18 years old, are anticipated to compete in the world championships. About 12 of the 20 invited countries are expected to send at least one team.

The organizing committee is also looking for volunteers to work as "controllers" during the week-long event.

Those interested in being part of the world-renowned competition can call (814) 571-5593.

Susquehanna, Juniata River Angler Surveys

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission is launching a large-scale angler survey that will explore fishing use and angler experiences on 130 miles of the Susquehanna and Juniata rivers. The survey is designed to measure catch, harvest, economic expenditures and angler opinions associated with fishing on sections of the two rivers for the period April through October. The Susquehanna River survey reach extends from Sunbury to the Holtwood Dam near the Maryland border. The survey reach on the Juniata River will extend from Port Royal to the mouth near Duncannon.

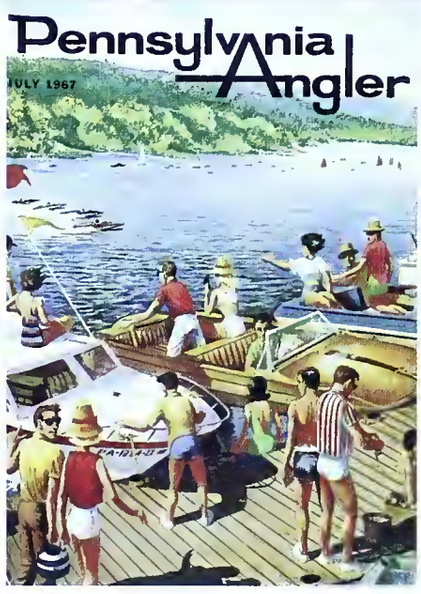
For the river survey, the Commission is partnering with the Penn State Statistical Consulting Center and the Penn State Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Unit as well as a professional economist from Colorado State University. Ten creel clerks, who will interview anglers on each survey day at access areas using a statistically structured sampling design, will collect the data for the survey. In visiting access areas, clerks will ask about their fish catch and the amount of time spent fishing. Creel clerks will also ask how much anglers spend on travel (gasoline), fishing tackle, and other gear such as bait. Finally, anglers will be asked about their satisfaction associated with fishing and their feelings about public and private access on these rivers. In addition to these on-the-water interviews, airplane flyovers will be conducted three times each week to count anglers and boaters who use the river.

"This is a large-scale effort to get important information on what is widely considered to be one of the best riverine fisheries in the nation. The survey results will provide valuable information that can then be used in setting the management directions for species such as smallmouth bass, catfish, walleyes, carp, rock bass and American shad," said Commission Executive Director Doug Austen.

A second study that will be done in conjunction with the creel survey is a smallmouth bass angling mortality study. This study will be designed to estimate what proportion of the smallmouth bass population dies as the result of fishing. The study will involve tagging a large number of fish. The tags will resemble an orange strand of "plastic spaghetti" located on the fish's stomach area. The tag strand contains a tag number, and a toll-free number to report the tags. Tag information must be reported by December 31, 2007. It is not necessary to harvest fish to report the tags. The tags simply need to be removed properly. Anglers can release tagged bass unharmed if they so desire. This study will begin later and the agency will provide additional information at that time.

This is the second large-scale river angler survey the Commission has undertaken in the past decade. In 2002, Pennsylvania partnered with the neighboring states of New Jersey, New York and Delaware to measure catch and harvest of all fish species on the Delaware River and Delaware Estuary. That survey revealed significant recreational activity on the river.

ANGLER ARCHIVES



The July 1967 cover painting, by Ron Jenkins, is a wonderful period piece depicting a boating lifestyle and the casual fashions of the 1960s. The boaters are apparently watching speedboat races. Today, 40 years later, our awareness of boating safety has changed dramatically. The boaters in the painting aren't doing anything illegal, but no one, either aboard the boats or on the dock, is wearing a life jacket. Today, the Commission informs boaters often about life jackets and to follow life jacket regulations. The Commission also encourages all boaters to wear a life jacket in and around boats even when that's not required by law. Pennsylvania boating accident fatality figures aren't available for 1967, the year this painting appeared, but in 1968, there were 27 recreational boating fatalities in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania had only 94,800 registered boats then, or one fatality for every 3,511 boats. Today's figure, with more than 340,000 boats registered, is one fatality for every 30,000 boats.

PFBC Spotlight

PA Fish & Boat Commission Hats!

Don't let the sun get in your eyes this summer.





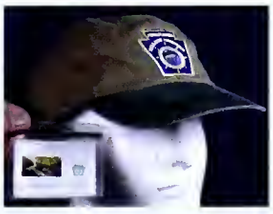
Get the protection & comfort with a PFBC hat!

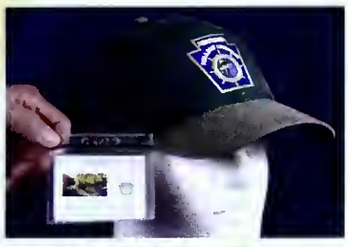
Each high-quality hat features:
- A fully-embroidered PFBC logo on the front.
- Six-panel construction and adjustable (hats with brim).
- Sewn eyelets for added ventilation.
- A free plastic license holder that can be pinned to the hat.



Hat #1: Foldable Hat- a heavy-duty hat that easily folds when not in use. $14.00

Hat #4: Sun Cover Hat- a long-bill hat with a sun cover along the back of the hat that tucks under when not in use. A lanyard from the hat attaches with a clip to your collar. $21.00





Hat #2: Canvas Hat- a canvas-style hat available in green with gray brim, blue, or moss. $14.00

Hat #3: Tan and Green Hat- a heavy-duty denim hat. $14.00





You can order these great hats online in The Outdoor Shop at: www.fish.state.pa.us, or send payment total (w/ $3.00 shipping and handling charge) to: PA Fish & Boat Commission, Educational Media Services, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000. Use check or money order payable to: PA Fish & Boat Commission. Remember, hats are tax-exempt.

PFBC FREE PUBLICATIONS

Please indicate the requested titles with a check mark. Single copies are free. *Limit:* 6 pamphlets.
For multiple copies of the same title, please call the Commission at 717-705-7835.

❑ Pocket Guide	*Commanwealth inland waters, Big Bass Program regulatians*
❑ A SmartStart for Safe Paddling	*Safety Tips for Paddlers*
❑ Angler Award Program	*State records, big fish, first fish, rules and applicatian*
❑ Basics of Water Pollution	*Types af water pallutian, effects an resaurces*
❑ Careers with the PFBC	*Oppartunity descriptians, civil service, nan-civil service*
❑ Drinking, Boating and the Law	*Commanly asked questians with answers*
❑ Fish Scale Sketch	*Cammissian averview, missian and pragrams*
❑ Fishing and Boating Map	*Accesses and amenities, with PennDOT highway map*
❑ Great Fishing Needs Great Habitat	*Brachure abaut habitat campanents*
❑ Hazards on the Water	*Recagnizing, avaiding dangers ta baaters*
❑ I Just Bought a Boat, Now What Do I Do?	*Boat registratian's frequently asked questions*
❑ Paddle Pennsylvania	*Water trail listings, map and launch permit applicatian*
❑ PA Fishes Identification Guide	*Quick reference with illustratians, depicts over 90 fish species*
❑ Snakes in Pennsylvania	*Bialagy, identificatian, venomous, nan-venamaus*

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Please mail entire farm to: **Educational Media Services, PA Fish & Boat Commission, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000.**
Allow 3-4 weeks for delivery. Or fax to Educational Media Services at 717-705-7831.
Publication requests can be emailed with publication title(s) and complete shipping information to: ra-be@state.pa.us.

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Products

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Wall Chart Sets (17" x 22" - Full Color):	Price	Quantity	Subtotal
(A) Set of: Coldwater Fishes, Coolwater/ Warmwater Fishes, Migratory Fishes, Miscellaneous Fishes, Panfishes, Forage Fishes *(6 posters)*	$5.66		
(B) Set of: Frogs, Salamanders, Snakes, Turtles *(4 posters)*	$3.77		
Educational Books:			
(C) Pennsylvania Amphibians & Reptiles	$9.43		
(D) Pennsylvania Fishes	$9.43		
Collectible Patches (fully embroidered):			
(E) 2005 Pickerel Frog	$4.71		
(F) 2005 American Toad	$4.71		
(G) 2006 Red-bellied Turtle	$4.71		
(H) 2006 Wood Turtle	$4.71		
(I) NEW! 2007 Green Salamander	$4.71		
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(K) 2005 PLAY Patch-Bluegill *(25th Anniversary)*	$2.83		
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Fishing & Boating Events Calendar — *July through September 2007*

July 14, 2007
Family Fishing Program, 9 a.m. to noon, Lake Chillisquaque, Danville, PA. Learn basic fishing skills like knot-tying, rigging the rod, casting, baiting the hook and taking a fish off the hook. You and your family will have the opportunity to fish. A fishing license is not required to participate in a Family Fishing Program and all equipment is provided. Adults must bring a child and children must bring an adult. More information: Jon Beam, 570-437-3131.

July 16-22, 2007
Susquehanna River Sojourn, near York. Pennsylvania River Sojourns are guided paddling trips, sponsored by the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), the PA Fish & Boat Commission, American Canoe Association and the Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds & Rivers (POWR). More information: Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Deborah Rudy, 717-737-8622.

July 21, 2007
Family Fishing Program, French Creek State Park (meet at boat launch at French Creek), Elverson, PA. More information: French Creek State Park, Lisa Miller, 610-582-9693.

August 1, 2007
Family Fishing Program, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., Gifford Pinchot State Park, Lewisberry, PA. More information: Ryan Walt, 717-705-7919.

August 4, 2007
Family Fishing Program, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., Ricketts Glen State Park Visitors Center, Benton PA. Contact: Judy Adamic, 570-477-7780.

August 16-19, 2007
Lake Erie Sojourn, near Erie. More information: Presque Isle State Park, Kathleen Ryan, (814) 833-7424.

August 25, 2007
Ohiopyle Falls Festival, near Ohiopyle, PA. American Whitewater, POWR and DCNR will hold the Eighth Annual American Whitewater Ohiopyle Over-the-Falls Festival. Whitewater paddlers nationwide will gather there to race over the spectacular 18-foot waterfall in the village of Ohiopyle. More information: American Whitewater, Barry Adams, bj2adams@juno.com or visit **www.fallsrace.com**.

September 15, 2007
Family Fishing Program, Little Pine Lake, Little Pine State Park, Waterville, PA. More information: DCNR, John Kaercher, 570-753-6000.

September 15-16, 2007
Clean Water Festival, 10 a.m to 3 p.m., Linesville State Fish Hatchery, Linesville, PA. The festival is geared toward educating the public on water quality, non-point source pollution, and water conservation issues, and gives local conservation agencies and watershed organizations the opportunity to provide interactive programs for participants. Events include Stream Critter Art Project by Allegheny College Creek Connections; fly-tying and macro ID demo; wetlands value and functions program; riparian buffers presentation; creek critter investigation; forest management and logging BMP tour by DCNR Bureau of Forestry; and displays by Crawford County Conservation District, Pymatuning State Park, Pennsylvania Lake Management Society, Penn Ohio Watershed Association, DCNR Bureau of Forestry, Natural Resources Conservation Service, French Creek Valley Conservancy, Allegheny College Creek Connections, French Creek Project, and Western PA Conservancy. More information: Crawford County Conservation District, Brian Pilarcik, 814-763-5269 or **festival@crawfordconservation.com**.

New WCO Class

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission last summer established its 18th Class of Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) trainees. The 10 cadets must complete an extensive 52-week specialized training program that began with some 20 weeks of instruction in law enforcement practices that meet the standards of the Municipal Police Training Act. An additional 32-week training period followed with 20 weeks of classroom instruction by the Commission at the H.R. Stackhouse School of Fisheries Conservation and Watercraft Safety and 12 weeks of supervised field training.

18th WCO Class Patch

Proceeds from patch sales are used by each WCO class to improve the PFBC's training facility and to purchase equipment used to train waterways conservation officers and deputies.



Product	Price	Quantity	Total
18th WCO Class Patch (4-inch patch)	$4.71	_____	_____

PA residents add 6% (29¢ each) State Sales Tax _____

Make check or money order payable to: 18th WCO Class. Send orders to: H.R. Stackhouse School, 18th WCO Class, 1150 Spring Creek Road, Bellefonte, PA 16823. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

Shipping & Handling _____
1-5 Patches - **Add $ .75**
6-10 Patches - **Add $1.30**
11-15 Patches - **Add $2.00**
16-20 Patches - **Add $2.60**

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Address _____

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Cast & Caught

"takemefishing"



Ron McGraw, State College, caught this 4-pound, 2-ounce smallmouth bass last year in the Huntingdon County portion of the Juniata River. He used a crayfish-patterned fly with 7-weight sinking line. The fish measured 20.5 inches long.



Robert A. Zaladonis Jr., New Eagle, PA, shows the 8-pound hybrid striped bass he caught last year in Pigeon Creek, Washington County. The striper hit a jig with a chartreuse plastic tail. The striper measured 25 inches long.



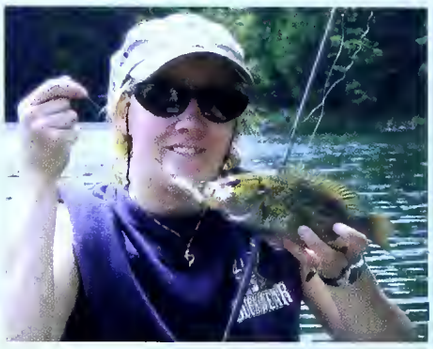
Brian Buss, Allentown, caught this 16-inch crappie last June on a minnow in Lake Nockamixon, Nockamixon State Park, Bucks County.



Virginia Sue Martin, Warren, used a jig to fool this 4.5-pound smallmouth bass last year in the Warren County portion of the Allegheny River. The smallie measured 20 inches long.



Hunter Charles Haney, age 3, hefts the 21.5-inch largemouth bass he caught last year in a pond on State Game Lands #95, Butler County. The bass hit a surface lure.



Stacey Browne, North Huntingdon, worked a crankbait to catch this rock bass last year in Koon Lake, Bedford County. The rock bass measured 9.5 inches long.



Nicholas McCarthy, Flinton, PA, worked a jig in Lake Erie last August to land this 23-inch largemouth bass.

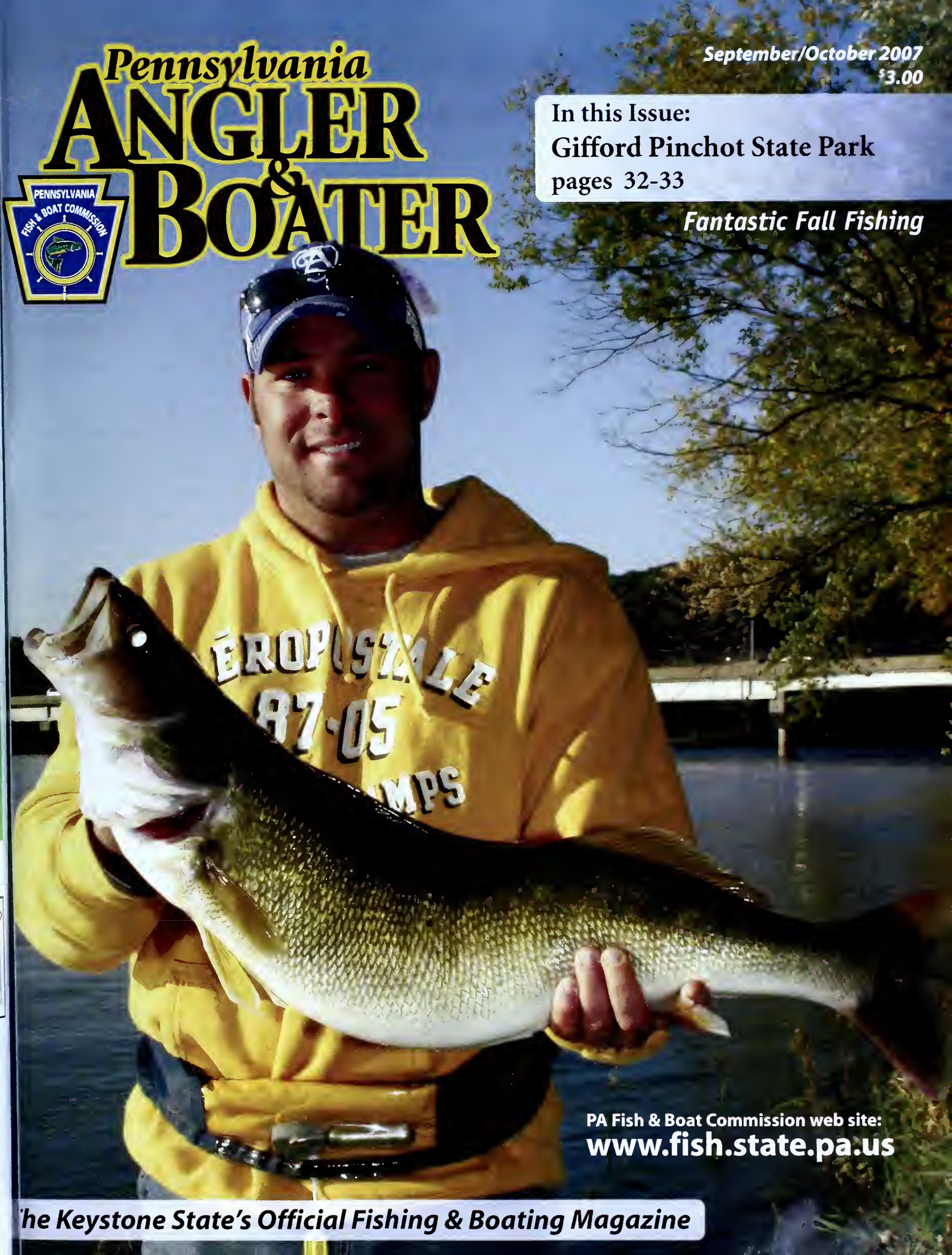
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September/October 2007
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Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER

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Fantastic Fall Fishing



PA Fish & Boat Commission web site:
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The Keystone State's Official Fishing & Boating Magazine



PROTECT CONSERVE ENHANCE

The Commission's Mission



by Douglas J. Austen, Ph.D.
Executive Director
PA Fish & Boat Commission

Each of us has a mission, whether we know it or not. For some people, it may be a highly evolved statement that governs all aspects of their lives. For the Fish & Boat Commission, the mission should encapsulate our reason for existing. It should describe to anyone, in simple terms, what we are about. As an independent Commonwealth agency and as one of the oldest and most respected state natural resource agencies, indeed a unique agency among the states, this mission should be seen as establishing a standard for others to emulate. It is the essence of who we are as an agency and as employees who work for the agency. With that in mind, the commissioners recently revised our mission:

The mission of the Fish & Boat Commission is to protect, conserve and enhance the Commonwealth's aquatic resources and provide fishing and boating opportunities.

For those of you who are familiar with our previous mission statement, this may seem like a subtle change from the past. Indeed, it is simply a reversal of order—but with substantial meaning behind the change. The emphasis is clearly placed on "protect, conserve and enhance" while not in any way diminishing the recreational aspects of the agency. Essentially, this is stating that our primary mission is to the resource, secondarily to the use of the resource.

Without a doubt, this has to be true. The resource is the foundation of what we do. Without quality streams, without clean water, without good habitat, we would have greatly diminished or non-existent recreational opportunities. In fact, in 1987 the Commission embraced the "Resource First" motto as one way to further articulate this resource-based mission. In 1981, several years before "resource first," the Commission rolled out Operation FUTURE (Fisheries Utilization Through User Resource Evaluation) and went through a difficult re-allocation of stocked fish, whereby stream characteristics instead of politics dictated stocking levels. Both of these efforts were part of the movement, which continues today, to base decisions on the resource instead of politics or simply educated guesses.

I believe that it is fair to say that the Commission has always been, at its core, a resource agency. But like any entity trying to live out its mission, be it an individual or a corporate body, we have not always fully and completely reflected those core values. We know that we can do better, and the redefined mission statement clearly sets this standard.

Created in 1866 with a goal of restoring anadromous runs of American shad, the agency has worked for nearly a century and a half on aquatic resources from every possible perspective. Through the resource devastation of the late 1800s and early 1900s, through the environmental movement of the 1970s and continuing today, the Commission has been active in protecting the resource. So how does this change in our mission statement really affect who we are?

First, it is a statement that reflects what has been increasingly happening in the agency but particularly so in the past several years. Consider the Commission's involvement and national leadership in dam removal. With over 70 dams removed in the past decade, fish passages constructed, and 100 or more similar projects in various stages of planning, the agency is an obvious national leader, catalyst and force in this vital effort.

Furthermore, our Division of Environmental Services provides review and input to over 3,000 permit requests per year with many of them resulting in modifications to land-disturbing projects that will better protect the resource. The recent creation of the Division of Habitat Management is opening new opportunities and creating real results in our streams, rivers and lakes. The agency's leadership in the development of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan and the State Wildlife Action Plan, active involvement in the Eastern

Brook Trout Joint Venture, monumental investment in hatchery water treatment system improvements, creation of the Three Rivers Ecological Research Center, recent initiation of a full review and updating of the Commission's trout management plan, and much more are all additional testaments to the transition of the agency to an even more resource-based focus than it was in the past.

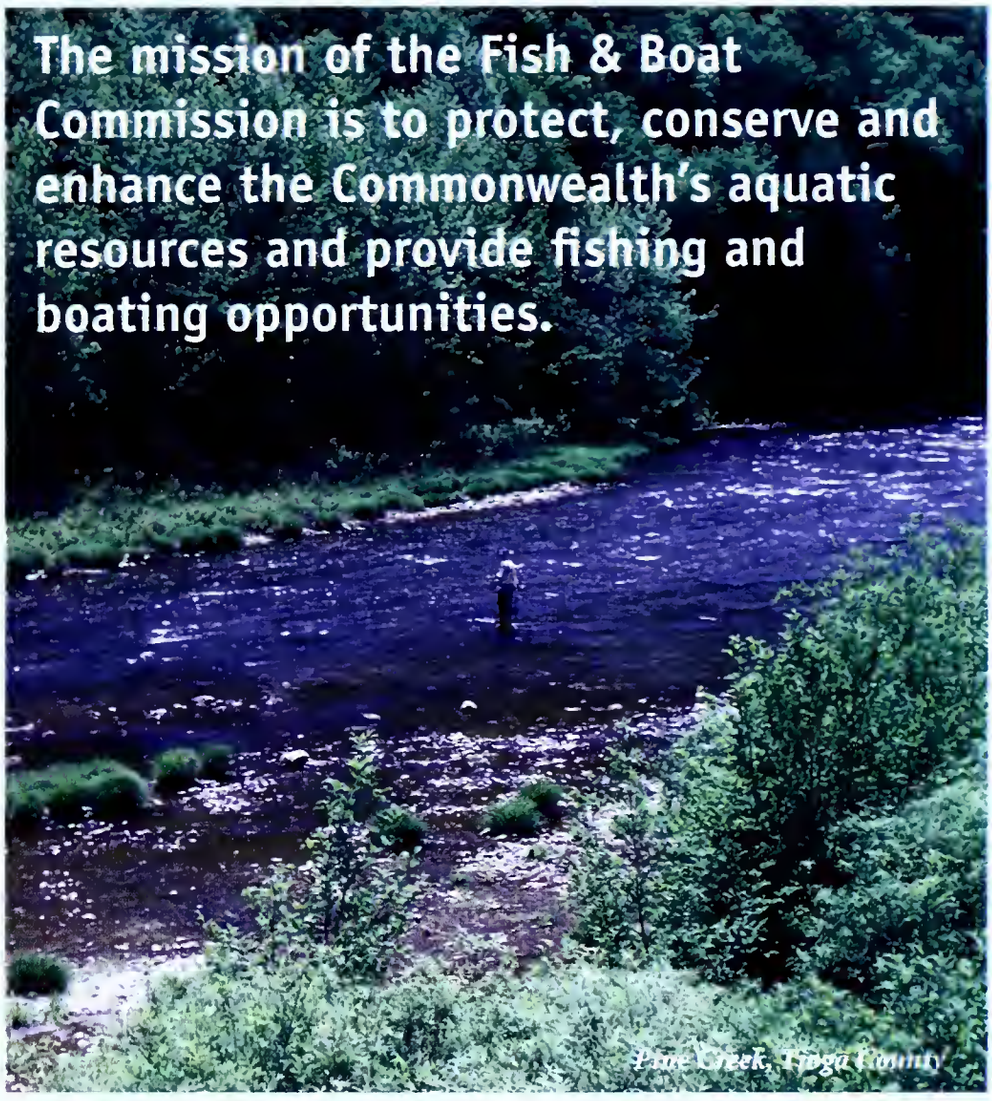
So the trajectory is good. Where also will this revised mission statement take us in the future?

The opportunities, both immediate and those yet to be realized, are limited only by our imagination. For example, over the next 15 years, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will be the recipient of substantial new federal funds to address abandoned mine sites. The Commission is actively working with DEP and many partners to incorporate our expertise to ensure that the most appropriate streams are cleaned up and fisheries created where none has existed for decades.

In another important area, our fisheries managers will be expanding their fish sampling not only to document recreational fish populations clearly (such as bass, walleye and trout), but also to document firmly and track whole fish communities (such as minnows, darters and sculpins). This work will allow us to understand better the relationships between land use change, pollutants, and other effects on the resource as described by the characteristics of the fishes that respond to those human-caused insults. Through this and other information we will also be able to evaluate fishing regulation proposals and options better by examining potential resource impacts. To assist in this process, we anticipate that we will be increasing the number of field biologists over the course of the next year or so.

We will see an increasingly challenging situation with water allocations that has resulted from the growing thirst of households, golf courses, industry, agriculture and power generation. Place on top of these concerns the dire predictions of temperature and precipitation alterations resulting from global climate change. Clearly we have daunting issues ahead of us.

These substantial and serious environmental challenges, along with many others, certainly will garner the agency's increasing attention and focus. "Resource First" will be played out in each situation and response.

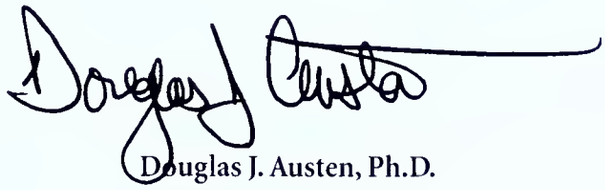


Pine Creek, Tioga County

photo-Russ Getting

However, the success of "protect, conserve, enhance" and a resource focus cannot be realized without the wholehearted and sincere adoption by the resource users and the citizens of the Commonwealth. To sing a song without an audience may lead to self-satisfaction, but it does little to create movement. Without people in the streams, on the lakes, or floating the rivers, we stand little chance of success. Thus, it is important to expand our ability to get the word out and to gain the full support of the angling and boating public. Without each of you and our many partners, we will stand little chance of meaningful success.

The adoption of a mission statement by itself does not create the proverbial "silver bullet" that will allow us simply and easily to address these challenges. But it does define the basis for our approach and a frame of reference against which our efforts can be evaluated over time. We hope that each of you will join us in reaffirming this approach and in partnering with the agency in this effort.



Douglas J. Austen, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Casting Around

Fantastic fall fishing



photo-Justin Torok

One gander at this issue's theme and contents, and you'll realize just how many fall fishing opportunities we have in Pennsylvania. For one thing, steelhead fishing will be improving as temperatures chill, so be sure to check the steelhead forecast on **page 7**. Successful fall smallmouth bass fishing now calls for special tactics, and regular contributor Jeff Knapp explains them on **page 8**. The Poconos offer some great fall trout fishing in smaller creeks, and on **page 14**, regular contributor Vic Attardo guides us to this fishing. On **page 11**, regular contributor Mike Bleech shows us how to catch largemouth bass with large baits fished under bobbers.

On **page 16**, regular contributor Darl Black takes us on a guided tour of catching river walleye this time of year. About this fishing Black says, "Fall into winter is the season for catching both numbers of eating-sized and trophy-sized 'eyes," so don't pass up this opportunity.

The Three Rivers Water Trail, 30 miles of the Allegheny River from Freeport to Pittsburgh, offers good fall action for smallmouth bass, walleye and sauger. Check out some of these possibilities in this issue's "Cast Away" column on **page 19**.

The Prince Nymph is a familiar fall fly favorite, and regular contributor Charles R. Meck ties one for us in step-by-step procedures on **page 27**. On **page 28**, Carl Haensel shows us how to fish a Prince Nymph in this issue's "Your Fishing Field Guide."

Our jetboats are going to get many workouts in this great fishing, so regular contributor Chris Gorsuch combs our craft with his survival kit to help us overcome jetboat problems that inevitably crop up. That story appears on **page 20**. And while boating to and from our fishing spots this fall, we should remember that we could be civilly responsible for any damage our boat wakes cause. So see **page 39** for advice on how not to give or receive a damaging surge.

Gifford Pinchot State Park, York County, gets many visitors annually, and one reason for this popularity is Pinchot Lake's good fishing and boating. Alice Stitt takes us on that trip in this issue on **page 31**.

This issue's PLAY newsletter, which begins on **page 49**, delves deeper into this issue's theme of "Fantastic Fall Fishing," so check it out!

A new class of waterways conservation officers (WCOs) graduated on August 10. Their training took a year. We'll cover the graduation more thoroughly in the November/December issue, but on **page 44** you can glimpse their training in this issue's "Notes from the Streams," written by the new WCOs when they were cadets.

Lastly, the red-spotted newt is one of Pennsylvania's most mysterious salamanders. Learn why beginning on **page 46**.—*Art Michaels, Editor.*

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Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER

The Keystone State's Official Fishing and Boating Magazine

September/October 2007
Volume 76 Number 5

Fantastic Fall Fishing

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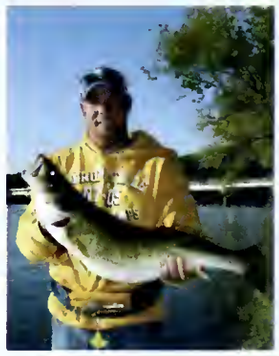
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On the cover

This issue's front cover shows PA angler Arron Dickey with a walleye he caught in the Allegheny River near Franklin, Venango County, during an Oil Region tournament. It weighed nearly 12 pounds and was 32 inches long. Dickey caught it on a tube jig. Photo by Darl Black.





MAIL

Enjoyment

Watching our granddaughters laugh and enjoy themselves last opening day was more enjoyment for me than you can imagine. They are two very confident girls, and they didn't want help from me or their father. "We can catch them ourselves," they said. We caught our fish on a small stream in Armstrong County.

I also would like to extent my appreciation to WCO Bruce Gundlach for the fine job that he is doing in the stocking program. He always takes time to talk to the youngsters who are helping or watching the stocking, explaining the program and showing them the various species of trout. He is truly an asset to the Commission. My hat goes off to WCO Gundlach and all of the our WCOs for a job well done.

Let me thank you and the staff for a wonderful magazine—also the entire Commission for the fine trout program. It has provided me and my family with many hours of enjoyment.—*Jim Lewis, Murrysville.*

Unusual "catch"

It may interest you to know that while fishing at night near a York County lake's boat launch I heard a bobcat, and in November 2006 I saw what I believe were bear tracks on the small beach in the campsite area.

I also had one of the more unusual catches of the year when I caught a raccoon. I was fishing at night at the same launch where I heard the bobcat, and I was casting parallel to a weed patch with a topwater lure. I thought I had a strike and all at once my line started out to the center of the lake, and I could see something large swimming with it. I thought I had caught a duck. After going a good 25 yards it reversed course and headed back to shore. It went in at a clearing between two weed patches and I started running toward it. Was I ever surprised when I saw it was a raccoon with another a short distance away. He started running, I clamped down and the plug pulled loose. I have no idea why he headed for the center of the lake.—*John Elliott, Mechanicsburg.*

Fish-for-Free Day

Here is a picture of my son with his catch from the last Fish-for-Free Day. My son, Jake Hornicak, is 4 years old (see below right) and possesses a growing passion for fishing and the outdoors. Jake, along with his dad, Grandpap, Uncle Chris and Great Uncle Dan, were fishing along the banks of the Ohio River near Glenfield. Within 10 minutes of Jake's first cast, he felt a big tug on his line that almost pulled him off his feet. After 10 seconds, we all realized that Jake had a fight on his hands, so I wrapped my arms around him and the rod for added support. With a little help, he got the fish to the bank and his uncle helped him handle and release the fish—a 19.5 inch freshwater drum that weighed about 4 or 5 pounds.

This fish was Jake's first catch, and he is very proud to tell his "fish story." Jake said that the fishing trip was "awesome" and that the fish was "cool."

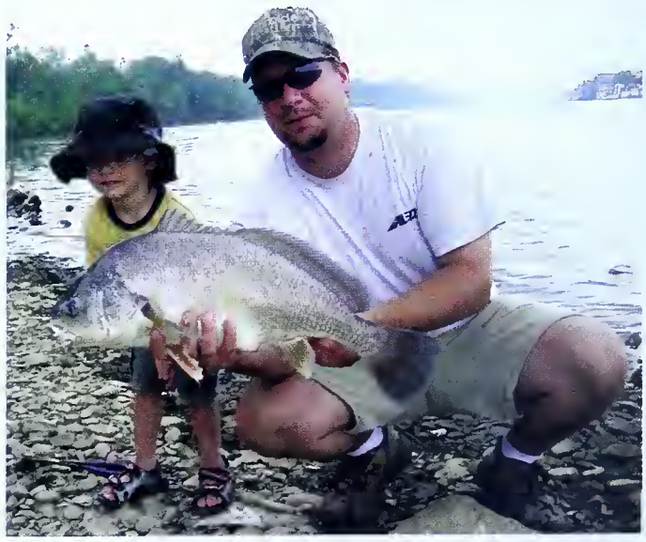
Pennsylvania's Fish-for-Free Days are an excellent program in encouraging family outings and fun, and I have the pictures now to prove it. Thanks for adopting the program.—*David A. Hornicak, Pittsburgh.*

Note: For more on Fish-for-Free Days in Pennsylvania, visit: www.fishandboat.com/images/pages/qa/fish_regs/fff.htm.—*Ed.*

Backtalk

Advise the Fish & Boat Commission concerning a topic in its purview. The Fish & Boat Commission invites you to write or email letters to the editor if you have an idea on *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* content; a question or concern about the Commission; something to say about fish and fishing, or boats and boating; or a helpful idea for anglers or boaters. Please hold letters to no more than 200 words. For publication consideration letters must be signed with the writer's name and address. Email must be similarly identified. Letters and email to the Commission become the property of the Commission, and they are edited for clarity and space considerations.

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Jake Hornicak, age 4, with his Fish-for-Free Day catch, a 19.5-inch freshwater drum. Jake's Uncle Chris Hornicak is holding the fish.

How's the STEELHEAD Fishing going to Be This Year?

by Chuck Murray

The Fish & Boat Commission expects another good year for steelhead. The reason we have confidence in that statement is because of the Commission's steelhead stocking program. The average annual Commission stocking rate over the last decade has been 1.1 million steelhead smolts per year. Local sportsmen's cooperative nurseries have added another 120,000 steelhead smolts annually. The 1.1 million steelhead stocked in Pennsylvania waters accounts for more than half of the 2 million steelhead stocked in Lake Erie by all agencies combined.



photo-Carl Haensel

The process begins when Commission hatchery staff collects steelhead brood fish from Trout Run or Godfrey Run. These nursery streams provide adult spawning steelhead for the perpetuation of Pennsylvania's steelhead program. The Commission is the only Lake Erie agency that collects brood stock from Lake Erie. We classify the progeny as a naturalized Lake Erie strain of steelhead, but they are actually a composite of many rainbow trout strains that were historically, and are presently stocked, in the Great Lakes.

After the Commission collects adult steelhead from the nursery streams, the fish are spawned at the Fairview State Fish Hatchery. The fertilized eggs are disinfected and then shipped to the Tionesta State Fish Hatchery, where they are incubated. After hatching, the majority of the fry (600,000) are retained and raised at the Tionesta hatchery. Tionesta also distributes steelhead fingerlings to the Fairview hatchery (300,000), the Linesville hatchery (100,000), and the local sportsmen's cooperative nurseries (120,000). These fish are raised in the hatcheries for about 15 months. They reach an average size of 7 inches. Each March, the Commission stocks the Lake Erie tributaries with these seeds of a trophy trout fishery.

The yearling steelhead smolts emigrate into Lake Erie in late spring as the stream water warms. After two summers in the lake, these fish return to the streams as adults and provide trophy trout angling opportunities through this unique put-grow-take fishery. Because stocking rates remain fairly constant from year to year, variability of year-class abundance is minimized, and the fishery demonstrates less pronounced variations in annual catch rate.

However, we do see fluctuations in angler catch rates. Biological and physical factors influence annual variations in catch rates. The abundance of adult walleyes and avian predators can have a measurable effect on smolt mortality, thus affecting the intensity of future spawning runs.

The weather also contributes to variations in annual catch rates. As steelhead stage for their annual spawning run, a cool, wet fall followed by a warm, wet winter is the best scenario for a good steelhead season. Good base flows and enough intermittent precipitation to keep the water slightly tinted usually result in good steelhead fishing. Fish will continue to enter the streams and migrate upstream if the stream flows are ample. If there is little rain and stream flows are notably reduced, steelhead often drop back to the lower, deeper reaches of the streams, or they may move back into the lake altogether.

One final factor contributing to the sustained quality of Pennsylvania's steelhead fishery is the catch-and-release ethic of many tributary anglers. Creel surveys conducted in 1993 estimated that tributary anglers released about half of the steelhead they caught. A follow-up stream survey conducted a decade later shows that the release rate increased to 79 percent.

The Commission remains committed to providing a quality steelhead fishery on Lake Erie. In addition to providing this unique fishery, the Commission is also securing public access to the resource. With the inception of the Lake Erie stamp, the Commission is actively acquiring additional access to the most popular steelhead streams through easements and purchases with money secured through this earmarked funding source. Areas are set aside that will provide access to quality steelhead fishing in perpetuity.

I'll say it again: We expect the steelhead fishing to be good this year and for years to come.

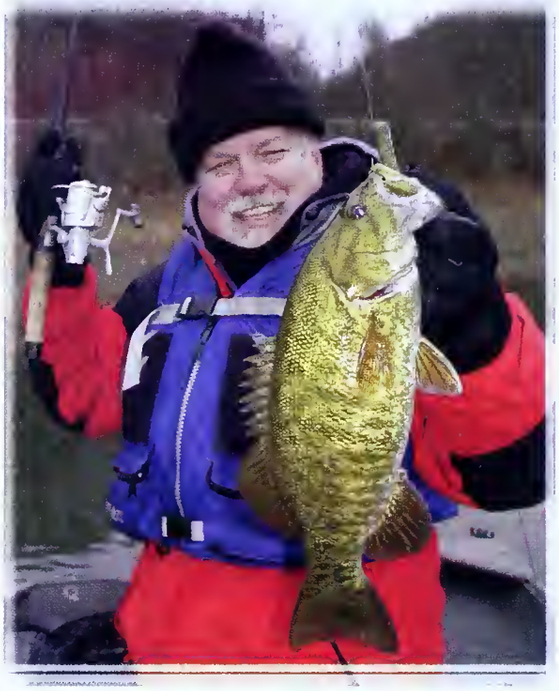
Chuck Murray is a fisheries biologist in the Commission's Lake Erie Research Unit.

Late-Fall RIVER BRONZE

by Jeff Knapp
photos by the author

Have you noticed how some fall fishing articles tend to mention that many anglers miss great fishing adventures when they put down the rod and reel in favor of a bow or gun? During the 20-odd years I've been writing outdoors articles, I've tried to avoid this well-used correlation—at least until now. Regardless of which outdoor passions draw you outside during the oh-so-short months of autumn, smallmouth bass fishing in rivers can simply be incredible, improving as fall progresses.

As summer gives way to fall, river smallies must adapt to the changing environment. It's not uncommon for rivers to run high and muddy during the early portion of the fall, fueled by hurricane-associated rainfall. There will be a die-off of the aquatic vegetation produced earlier that year. If the weeds were plentiful, as they are when rivers are fairly low and clear during the spring and early summer, the flotilla of dead growth can severely hamper angling efforts.



River stretches with irregular banks often hold river bass during the late season.

A productive early fall to mid-fall tactic, especially when the water is high and off-color, is to work shorelines with a spinnerbait. Grassy banks and island areas inundated with water are perfect venues in which to work a spinnerbait. So are areas located above gravel bars that wash into the river at the mouths of feeder streams. A mud line can form in such places, created by the confluence of clear creek water joining the flow of the dirtier river. Don't be afraid to throw somewhat gaudy, large baits. Last fall, the river bass I tempted had a strong preference for a spinnerbait sporting tandem orange willowleaf blades and an orange/chartreuse skirt.

Mid-fall is also one of my favorite times to cast a crankbait for river bass. Water temperatures are in the 50s; at this temperature the bass are still willing to hold in areas with a moderate degree of current. Short, squat crankbaits that dive to the 3- to 5-foot range are ideal for bumping along the rocky bottoms of runs, as long as dead weeds aren't an issue. The idea is to contact the bottom occasionally. If your bait is heavily plowing the bottom, it'll snag too often. Opt for a bait that runs shallower. My color preference in crankbaits leans toward both perch and crawfish patterns.

Spectacular scenery aside, the river bass fishing you'll find in the middle portion of fall is only a primer of what's to come. As water temperatures drop into the 40s and the fallen foliage is flushed from the river, the fish begin to load up in easy-to-define locations where they continue to eat throughout the fall and early winter.

As with all river species, as the water turns cold, smallmouth bass will vacate current areas in favor of pools and eddies with little flow. It's not uncommon to catch walleyes, muskies and northern pike along with smallmouth bass during a day's fishing, though bass will often show a fondness for one slackwater area over another, or sometimes a specific portion of such an area.

So the most important common element in good late-fall river smallmouth spots is slow current. What causes this reduction in current varies from location to location.

Current-deflecting gravel bars/shoals are often found at the mouth of streams entering a river. These structures can reduce the near-shore current for over 100 yards downstream. In fact, it's more common to find late-season smallies toward the downstream portion of the slackwater area. Walleyes and muskies may be tucked in tighter behind the bar, but smallmouth bass tend to be located farther downriver, closer to the current.

River stretches with irregular banks often hold river bass during the late season. Small points that jut into the flow



Regardless of which outdoor passions draw you outside during the oh-so-short months of autumn, smallmouth bass fishing in rivers can simply be incredible, improving as fall progresses.

create pockets of slow water. Some spots have the right stuff; others that look quite similar don't. The only way to find out is to fish them, which allows you to check not only for fish activity but also the physical intricacies of each location.

Boulder-lined banks are yet another location that equates to the kind of current bronzebacks need at this time.

Large slackwater pools found in conjunction with gravel shoals can hold large numbers of bass—in the right conditions it's possible (actually likely) to pull several fish from such a place. The quiet pockets formed by rocks and shoreline points won't hold as many fish in one particular spot. But such areas can stretch for hundreds of yards. So you can see the potential for pulling bass from banks of this type.

How current affects these areas depends on the flow. A rise or fall of a foot or two dramatically changes things, and consequently how bass use certain areas. Keeping a logbook of your fishing's vital statistics that includes river flows will help paint a picture of what to expect during future trips.



It's unlikely that there is a better all-around fall river bait than a tube jig.

Just about any bass lure will catch late-fall river fish, so long as it's a jig. While that may seem like a narrow approach, the truth is many jig-type offerings are effective.

Boat Control

Controlling your boat has a lot to do with how many fish you catch in a day. In most situations, it's best to slow the boat's downriver movement as it drifts with the current. Generally, the water you are holding the boat in is heavier in current than the areas near the bank where you are fishing. I use a bow-mount electric motor with a foot-controlled motor drive (as opposed to a cable-drive foot pedal). This allows your jig to be presented naturally while keeping you from blowing down the river, missing potential spots. Strong wind complicates things, especially a strong upriver wind, where the two forces spend the day competing. These are the days when you earn all the fish you catch.

Anchoring is an option I save when fishing directly above a gravel bar. It's a good way to hold the boat while you cast to feeding bass that are holding on the edge of the gravel lip.

Wear your life jacket, and ensure that all aboard your boat wear their life jackets.—*JK.*

It's unlikely that there is a better all-around fall river bait than a tube jig. On certain days something else may excel, but if I were limited to just one jig, it would be a 3-inch tube—a two-tone one, watermelon seed with a white belly. Not that I'm particular.

Anglers who have joined me on late-fall river forays, anglers not in tune with the merits of the two-tone tube, have done quite well (even better, I suppose, on occasion) with tube bodies of various shades of green, pumpkinseed, smoke and chartreuse. I've witnessed times when spraying the tail of a tube with a scented, contrasting dye proved effective.

Rivers have a way of eating jigs, so carry an ample supply of 1/8-, 3/16- and 1/4-ounce insert-style leadheads on a 4/0 hook. Even though late-season smallies may hold in deeper water much of the time, when they are eating they tend to be quite shallow. There's no need to go heavier than a quarter-ounce jig. The idea is to cast to the bank and to fish the initial shallow water that's likely to hold feeding bass.

Hair-bodied leadheads run a close second to tube jigs. Natural-colored versions work, as do ones tied with olive-green and/or chartreuse-dyed bucktail. I'm sure there are other color patterns that work. Rib-style 4- or 5-inch worms dressed on a leadhead jig are good for smallies. Walleyes also like them, as they do tubes and bucktails. Smaller versions of skirted rubber bass jigs, dressed with 2-inch crayfish-imitating chunks, also have their place.

Bite-offs from toothy critters are common, so most of my rods are rigged with a foot-long 60-pound-test fluorocarbon leader. It's nice to get a bonus pike or musky actually in the boat before the release, even on days when you are not targeting them.

Last fall, starting around Thanksgiving and running through the first of the year, my partners and I regularly boated 30 to 50 smallies per outing. Many of the fish ran from 15 to 19 inches, with a few hitting the 20-inch mark. The action continued until early January, when a deluge of high water put the river fishing on hold for the next six weeks. We were still catching them in 37-degree water.

This isn't to imply that late-fall smallmouths crush a bait. Actually, many fish "are just there" as you swim a jig off the bank. At times, though, you will feel that distinct tap of a bite. Good catch numbers have as much to do with big numbers of fish stacking up in defined locations as anything else. More conservative bass regulations are in place during the late fall. Even still, I encourage total catch and release of these vulnerable fish.

by Mike Bleech
photos by the author

Big Baits Under BOBBERS FOR BIG BASS

Fishing big baits under bobbers is probably the most effective method for catching big largemouth bass, and it does very well for big smallmouths. Bobber-watching is in no way inferior to any other fishing tactic. And as with any other fishing strategy, the degree of success depends on the amount of attention to every detail.

Baits

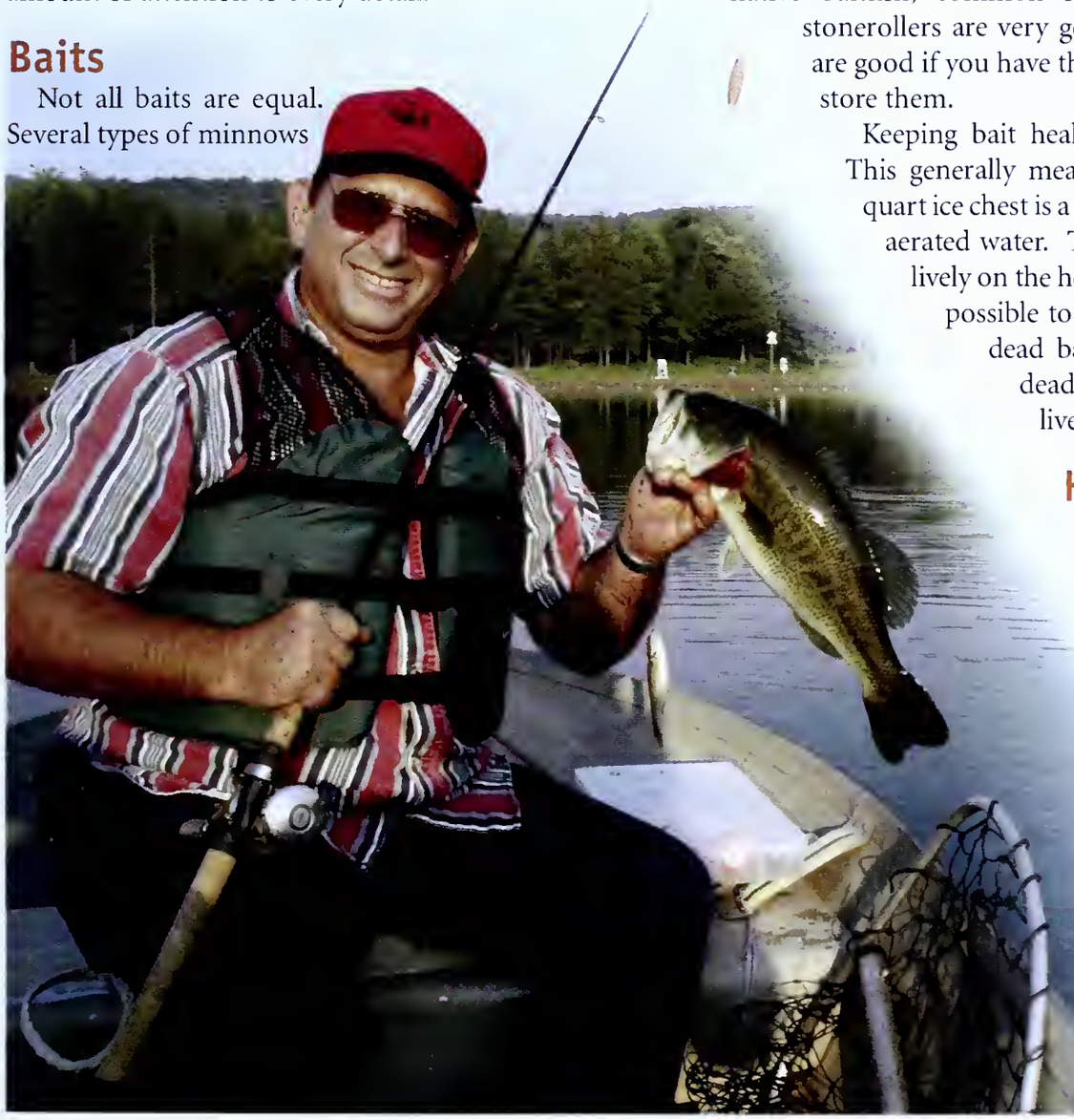
Not all baits are equal. Several types of minnows make good bass bait. Golden shiners are perhaps the most widely available in bait shops. These fish are excellent bait. They are fairly easy to keep in a well-aerated cooler, and they remain lively on hooks.

You might have to catch your own bait. Among the native baitfish, common shiners, chubs, suckers and stonerollers are very good baits for big bass. Shad are good if you have the facilities to catch them and store them.

Keeping bait healthy and lively is important. This generally means spacious storage—a 100-quart ice chest is a good choice—with cool, well-aerated water. The superiority of bait that is lively on the hook can't be over-stressed. It's possible to catch bass on listless or even dead bait, but bass that will ignore dead bait often will be all over lively bait.

Hooking baits

The way a bait is hooked is one of the fine points of fishing baits under bobbers. Hook the bait lightly, inflicting as



Among the native baitfish, common shiners, chubs, suckers and stonerollers are very good baits for big bass.

little damage as possible, in a manner that allows the bait movement and in a manner adapted to the specific fishing method. Sharpening hooks will not only increase the likelihood of sinking a hook into a bass, but it will also make it easier to hook bait without damaging it.

If a bait is to remain in one position still-fishing for extended periods, then hook it near the dorsal fin, either in front or behind, whichever side has the most fleshy area so that the hook can be inserted without passing through the spine. Hooking this way near the middle of the bait allows the quickest hook set. It also hangs the bait in a natural manner so the bait doesn't have to fight the weight and bulk of the hook to remain upright.

If a bait is to be moved, hook it through both lips inserting through the bottom jaw. This way while reeling or trolling it will be moving in a natural manner, head first. Even when using a run-and-gun approach, lip-hooking is essential to keeping minnows lively. Pulling a bait that is hooked near the dorsal fin through the water will quickly kill it.

Using a bait that's hooked near the dorsal fin makes it practical to set the hook as soon as a bass takes the bait. Hooking large bait through the lips might require waiting until the bass turns the bait in its mouth. They'll try to swallow it head first. But don't wait too long or the bass will be hooked deeply. There's nothing wrong with taking a few bass home for dinner, but most serious bass anglers release most of their catch. Bigger bass typically get a bait completely in their mouths on the initial attack, so setting a hook immediately is a good idea if you intend to release your catch. You'll still hook most of the larger bass that take your bait, and you can assume that most of the missed strikes were smaller bass.

The best hooks for this tactic have wide gaps and offset points. Stick with fine-wire hooks.

After hooking the bait, always check the hook to be sure a scale isn't covering the point. Just one of those tiny scales can prevent the hook from penetrating the bass.

How far you set the bait under a bobber depends completely on the situation. Generally, it's best to get the bait close to the depth where you anticipate the bass are holding. This is less important in clear water and while bass are active. Aggressive bass will move quite a long distance to attack a bait. Wakes of bass attacking close to the surface prove that in some situations they'll come from as far away as 20 feet. But anglers who direct their tactics only toward the most aggressive bass will linger through many fishless days. Treat every bass as a wary bass and you'll do well.

Choosing bobbers

Use torpedo-shaped bobbers. Perhaps a bass will pull a balloon underwater. But again, fish for the wariest bass. A torpedo-shaped bobber creates the least resistance when pulled underwater. Bobbers should be big enough to prevent larger bait from pulling them underwater for any longer than a few seconds, but no larger.

Slip bobbers can be used in any situation, set to any depth and cast best, so why use any other kind?

Use a splitshot to keep the bait down, if necessary. Big shiners tend to struggle toward the surface, so they'll require splitshot. Suckers and stonerollers tend to struggle toward the bottom, so adding weight shouldn't be necessary. Since the weight impedes the bait's movement, use no weight whenever possible and as little as possible any other time.

Don't use any other terminal rigging. Anything superfluous adds to an unnatural appearance. Occasionally pike, muskies and pickerel will take a bait and cut the line, but just put up with it.



Rigging, tactics

Whatever you do, don't simply go out and drown minnows. Rigging is the easy part of this game, but getting the bait close to the bass is the most important part. This requires a decision. There are three primary presentation methods: Waiting them out while still-fishing, a run-and-gun approach, or trolling. Which is right?

Don't still-fish unless you have confidence that you know the bass you want is in a specific location. Fortunately, this isn't at all uncommon. Often that level of confidence is leveraged by mobility. An angler in a boat can afford to move more often than an angler on shore. A shore angler's changing location might require packing up the gear, walking back to the vehicle, and then driving several miles.



When bass are active, a run-and-gun approach is usually most productive. There's no sense lingering too long with a bait at any one spot. Active bass often take the bait even before the bobber has settled into the water. Flip the bait into every good-looking place you encounter, leave it in place for a few minutes, and then move on.

Trolling live bait is generally the best method when bass aren't aggressive simply because it covers a lot of water. The more bass that see the bait, the more likely you'll find a willing taker.

Trolling is also a very effective method to use along long weed lines or along any long cover or structure.

Trolling live minnows is done a lot more slowly than trolling artificial lures. Generally it should be done with an electric motor set at the slowest possible speed, even stopping frequently. Rowing or paddling can be even better. Rowing or paddling alternately accelerates and decelerates the bait, causing it to rise and fall.

Fishing live bait under bobbers can be effective whenever bass are willing to feed. But there's no fishing method that's best all the time in every situation. In warmer water, while bass are aggressive, various tactics using artificial lures might be better. Fishing live bait might be more of a cool-water tactic, a strategy to use when bass won't take artificial lures.

Live bait is the method to rely on when specifically fishing for big bass. If this is your goal, use large baits, at least 6 inches long, and larger is better. Smaller baits will attract small bass and any other smaller game fish in the area. A 20-inch bass can easily swallow a 10-inch bait. As the water cools during fall, larger baits become increasingly important. The brain of a bass might be viewed as a computer that figures how the fish can gain more energy than it expends, which is best accomplished by attacking larger prey.

More About Big Bass

The Fish & Boat Commission web site black bass pages, titled "PA's Bruise Brothers," include an enormous amount on black bass (largemouths smallmouths and spotted bass). The pages include bass fishing tips, hotspot locations, bass management information, bass regulations, scientific reports, bass web links, related topics, selected articles from the pages of *PA Angler & Boater* magazine, and more. On the web site main page, **www.fish.state.pa.us**, on the left hold your cursor over "Fishing," and in the drop-down menu click on "Pennsylvania Fishes." Then click on the illustration of the smallmouth bass, and on the fish species feature pages, click on the picture of the largemouth bass.

POCONO trout

by Vic Attardo
photos by the author



"I make no bones about how much I love fishing Tobyhanna Creek in Monroe County."

For anyone who hasn't spent time trout fishing in the Poconos, its streams and rivers are just strange places with unrecognized names. But for those who have fished the gushing, tannin-stained flows, hiked up the clear-water runs, or tried to balance on the teetering rocks in the region's rushing rivers, Pocono trout fishing is one of a kind.

There are so many different types of trout waters in the northeast that the courses evade a characterization. Here are some of the smaller best.

Tobyhanna Creek

I make no bones about how much I love fishing Tobyhanna Creek in Monroe County. Wild browns, wild brookies and stocked brookies heavily infuse Tobyhanna's twisted, braided, often shallow, occasionally substantially deep, brown-tinted waters.

Tobyhanna Creek has a one-mile section of Delayed-Harvest, Artificial-Lures-Only (DHALO) water on the northeast side of PA Route 423 east of I-380. This is mostly flat water with a couple of very wide turns to give the stream some character. The pool upstream of the grated bridge is a known hotspot.

But I like the waters above, in State Game Lands 127 on the south side of PA Route 423. There the tannin Tobyhanna tumbles, slides and twists; its braids and narrow chutes are a predominant feature as are its lengthy smoother runs.

Access to the open Tobyhanna Creek is along PA Route 423 between Lake Naomi and the interstate.

Tom's Creek

You know the song, "Stairway to Heaven"? That describes the Class A wild trout waters of Tom's Creek. Once above the lower platform, at the parking area on Little Egypt Road in Pike County, Tom's Creek rises nearly like the circular steps in some giant rotunda. The stream slinks down from the mountain and it does so with short, frequent risers and pools measured in a few square yards. If you tried to walk directly up Tom's Creek, you'd need big feet and long legs. There is a path parallel to Tom's Creek that makes giant leaps unnecessary.

Keep climbing Tom's Creek and the stream flattens out a bit on the mountain platform. It also narrows and the pools get lanky and shallower.

Tom's Creek has wild browns, but they're persnickety little devils. They can see you coming as soon as you park your car. Then they head for the cover of the step's little waterfalls and plunge pools. Every time you're careless, all you'll see are fast-flying dark arrows and then they're gone under the white foam.

The best pattern in this total Catch-and-Release, All-Tackle fishery is the camouflage you wear. The browns will fall for common fall attractor patterns, such as the Royal Wulff, Stimulator and the Slate Drake.

Don't expect to catch a lot of fish on Tom's Creek—it just doesn't happen. You're usually not in complete control of the situation. People hiking up the trail also spook fish. You should try to work where another fisherman hasn't for a time. Tom's Creek is a tough place, but it's a jewel.

East Branch Wallenpaupack Creek

There are no trout-stopping barriers between Lake Wallenpaupack and the East Branch Wallenpaupack Creek. That means whatever swims in small to the lake can swim back out again much, much bigger.

In the fall, the East Branch gets a limited run of browns that are as big as logs. Catching one can take days of work.

The easiest access is at the stream crossing bridge on PA Route 507 near Newfoundland along the southern border of Wayne and Pike counties. A new bridge was installed about three years ago, but the huge pool under the bridge was maintained. Additional sporadic access lies east of PA Route 507 between the breaks for PA Route 191.

Butternut Creek

There is nothing buttery smooth about Butternut Creek in Wayne County. In fact, if in naming this stream they were thinking about rocks as nuts, then they got the name right.

Butternut Creek is a narrow, twisting and slowly rising cobblestone street. In the right places it' not hard to fish, but like the presence of friendly doors along a back alley, there are not many. Still, I've had fall times on the special regulation waters of Butternut Creek where I've caught oodles of trout in a short distance. A 2.1-mile section of Butternut Creek is managed with DHALO regulations, so when the stream is stocked in the fall, those trout get to remain for sometime.

At the PA Route 191 crossing, Butternut Creek is a steep, rocky run that isn't inviting to fish. Upstream the creek has an easier gradient, and there are actually mild runs and pools over 40 feet long. Butternut Creek flows into the West Branch Wallenpaupack Creek. The easiest access is along PA Route 191 near the I-84 overpass.



Butternut Creek, Wayne County

West Branch Wallenpaupack Creek

I've crossed the deep water of the West Branch Wallenpaupack Creek, in the middle of the special regulation zone in Wayne County. At the right spot you can make it over the stream to fish the even deeper pools ahead. And you must take this passage because it's next to impossible to fish the stream from the side against the road—low overhanging trees prevent the necessary upstream cast.

Even in this across-stream position, you're teetering on the edge of a wader washout, that narrow line between keeping the water above the top of your chest waders or have it come spilling in to chill your feet. The West Branch, so thick with overgrowth, so deep of pool and so peppered with fallen branches and limbs, requires a lot of acrobatics to fish. But it has the trout to make it worth fishing, particularly the 1.6-mile DHALO stretch.

And even if the stream gives you the fantods, drive north a little just to see the beautiful waterfall.

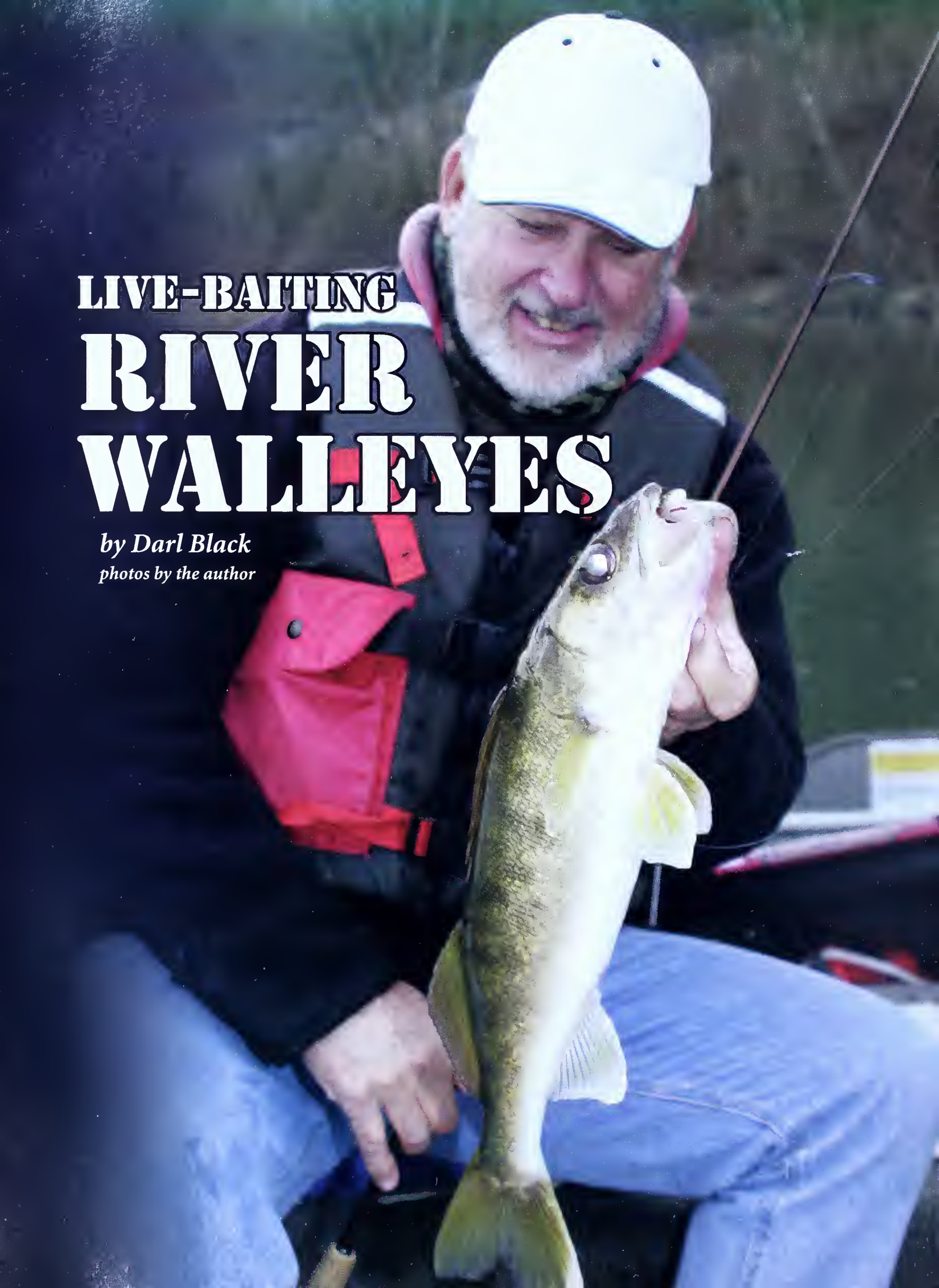
The least confusing way to reach the special regulation area is to take PA Route 191 to just past the junction of PA Route 196, turn left onto Moon Road, which is SR 3004, and then follow Moon Road to the jogging turn onto Pond Road. The stream is along Pond Road.

The waterfall is beyond the First Baptist Church of Hollisterville at the intersection of SR 3004, Pond Road and PA Route 690. Walk-in fishing has been permitted here. The waterfall's ledge flats are interesting.

Grassy Run

For something more like northern Maine than Pennsylvania, try the bog-encircled waters of Grassy Run in Delaware State Forest in Pike County. The stream lies east of PA Route 402 south of U.S. Route 6. There is trailhead parking for the forest and then the bridge figuratively crosses into Tarabithia.

Back in fantasy land, there are wild brook trout living amid constantly bending waters. Snowshoes might help walking on the sinking tussocks of marsh ground, but stick to the harder-bottom stream and work on these wild brookies feeding in the aquatic grass.



LIVE-BAITING RIVER WALLEYES

by Darl Black
photos by the author

I am mostly a catch-and-release angler. But come fall, I get the urge almost weekly for a walleye dinner. It's perfect timing because river walleyes begin feeding more ravenously than they have all summer. I fish the Allegheny River and French Creek regularly during the summer for smallmouth bass, and routinely catch a few incidental walleyes. However, my low walleye numbers don't concern me because I'm far more interested in catching acrobatic smallmouths than walleyes through most of the year.

But every diehard river 'eye angler will agree that fall into winter is the season for catching both numbers of eating-sized and trophy-sized 'eyes. It's so easy, even I can do it!

Changes

Sometime in September, river systems in Pennsylvania begin seasonal changes that lead to excellent walleye fishing. A change in temperature usually kicks things off. Even though September's shorter days are still warm and sunny, the nighttime air temperature is getting cooler, so the summer-long heating of the water is now reversing. The gradual cooling has a significant effect on both prey and predator, triggering moderate feeding activity.



A variety of baitfish from local waters works for successful fall walleye action.

Once daytime air temperatures drop below those of water temperatures, water cools more rapidly and the walleye activity kicks into gear. Walleyes remain on the feed right through December.

The second important change is the flow. Around the beginning of October, river water levels usually rise because of autumn rains. Also, on some creeks and rivers, levels increase because of water releases from upstream reservoirs for winter drawdown.

I have no idea whether increased water flow has a physiological impact on walleyes, but the greater water volume certainly forces baitfish and walleyes to shift location, thereby positioning themselves in easy to identify feeding positions.

The third item that contributes to improved walleye fishing in the fall is water color. The "clear" water of summer makes for very tough walleye fishing. But let the river "color up" a bit from rain runoff, and walleyes will be easier to catch. Higher flows in the fall bring sustained color changes to the river and a more reliable day-to-day bite.

However, roiled water makes it almost impossible to catch walleyes. The ideal river color is what river rats generally call "walleye green"—an emerald tint that occurs partway between "too clear" and "too muddy."

Live bait

It certainly is possible to catch river walleyes with artificial lures in these ideal conditions. However, the average angler will catch more walleyes, and likely larger ones, with live bait—but not just any live bait.

The key is to use indigenous baitfish. In other words, you want to fish with live bait that walleyes are targeting in the river, as opposed to minnows and shiners sold by bait stores.

Most store-bought bait comes from a distant commercial hatchery and may not be a species native to local rivers. Most of the favorite indigenous baitfish species are never available through bait shops.

More importantly, commercially raised bait doesn't have that natural survival instinct. Wild baitfish, on the other hand, recognize the danger imposed by predators, and the specific gyrations and possible pheromone releases by prey at the approach of a predator can trigger a walleye into engulfing the bait.

In the Allegheny River Watershed, the favored local baitfish species changes from early fall to late fall/winter. This switch is caused largely by availability of bait species that anglers can catch, seine or trap.

During September, the two hottest live baits for walleyes carry the nicknames "sand pike" (logperch) and "riffle runners" (streamline chub), species associated with fast, shallow riffles. As water temperatures drop, these baitfish species become harder to find.

Next is what I call the "brown minnow stage" of baitfishing. "Junie suckers", stonerollers, creek chubs and large bluntnose minnows are among the best indigenous baits to fish in October through early December.

Finally, with water temperatures approaching 40 degrees, the silver-sided common shiner takes center stage.

While 3- to 4-inch sand pike and riffle runners satisfy walleyes in September, as the water temperatures continue to drop, walleyes feast on larger bait. Some anglers like stonerollers, creek chubs and suckers in the 7-inch range; I prefer ones that are 4 to 6 inches long. While common shiners can reach 7 inches, I definitely stick with ones that are 4 to 5 inches.

Some of the species mentioned above can be found in the Susquehanna and Delaware River watersheds. Others like the riffle runner are native only to the Allegheny/Ohio watersheds. Sometimes it's a matter of experimenting with whatever indigenous baitfish you obtain in your watershed to see which will work. Be careful not to scoop up a threatened or endangered species. *The National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Fishes* is the best guide I've found to help identify baitfish. The Commission's book *Pennsylvania Fishes* also includes illustrated and text descriptions of some of our more common minnow species.

Rigging

For live bait fishing on the river, I favor a 6.5-foot to 7.5-foot medium-power spinning rod with a moderate action tip—not a fast tip. The reel will be spooled with 8-pound-test fluorocarbon line.

There are two basic rigs to consider. One style is intended for casting and letting the bait drift along the bottom for a short distance. The other rig is intended for vertical fishing from a drifting boat over deeper water.

The cast/drift rig is simple. Tie on an appropriate bait hook and crimp on enough splitshot to the line about 12 inches above the hook so that the weight ticks the bottom as the bait drifts with the current. If you need more than three large splitshot, consider switching to a cylinder weight pegged in place with a rubber sinker stop. Then tie on the hook.

From shore or from an anchored boat, cast upstream at about a 45-degree angle and follow the bait with the rod tip as it is swept downstream, just ticking the rocks and gravel. Use too much weight and the sinker will anchor the bait. Don't use enough weight and the bait never reaches the bottom where walleyes are lying.

Casting bait to breaks and current seams is effective to depths of perhaps 10 feet. If you're fishing moving water where the depth is greater than 10 feet, a more efficient approach may be vertical fishing from a drifting boat.

A vertical drift rig typically consists of a three-way swivel with the main line tied to one arm, an 8- to 10-inch leader with sinker attached to the second arm, and a short leader terminating with the hook on the third arm. Another option is a drop-shot rig—the hook is tied directly to the main line with a Palomar knot and the sinker is clipped to the long tag end.

The best situation is to keep the rig as nearly vertical as possible beside the boat, but not necessarily straight down—a slight angle is permissible. In a deep flow, surface water moves at a faster speed than water near the bottom, so rigs tend to drag behind the boat. The amount of weight needed depends on the depth and the flow's strength. Usually a 3/16-, 1/4- or 5/16-ounce sinker is sufficient.

The hook is critical—the size must "fit" the bait. While a size 6 or 4 works for smaller 3- or 4-inch bait, a size 1 or 1/0 is required for a 6-inch bait. I run the hook point through the baitfish's lower jaw and then out through one of the nostrils. This method keeps the bait lively for a long period.

I favor circle hooks for casting because a walleye picks up the bait and begins moving off with it—the perfect scenario for a do-nothing-but-reel circle hook hookset. Most often the hook will be embedded in the corner of the fish's mouth, allowing you to return a sub-legal walleye to the river unharmed.

Nevertheless, I have encountered problems connecting with walleyes using a circle hook on a vertical drift rig. Circle hook success requires the fish to be moving away from you so that the line slides into the corner of the mouth. When presenting bait straight down, the line does not go to the corner because you're lifting straight up on a hookset. Therefore, a standard baithook is a better choice.

Finding fish

On the river in the fall, it is possible to catch walleyes from 4 feet of water and 14 feet of water on the same day. Depth is irrelevant to walleyes—they go where they will find bait.

River walleyes use breaks or changes to the flow that create a near-slack water sanctuary for them to wait for bait to swim by. These current breaks fall into several broad categories: 1) a physical obstacle that disrupts the flow, like large rocks or logs on the bottom; 2) a bottom contour change that alters the flow, like a washout hole or submerged lip; and 3) two current flows of different velocity and directions that merge, creating a slower-moving stretch referred to as a "current seam." These differing vector flows may be generated by an inflowing tributary, an island, a bridge pillar, or deflection in a river bend. Shoreline pocket eddies are also very important spots during moderate to high water flows.

Unless you're fishing from the bank with no other option, don't let your bait rest in one spot waiting for a walleye to stumble into it. Take your bait to the fish by letting the current do the work. You'll be more satisfied with the results.

Gathering and Keeping Bait

Indigenous baitfish may be taken in several different manners. Riffle runners and sand pike can be caught only one at a time with a tiny piece of red worm on a size 14 hook from riffle areas. A minnow trap may be used to capture a variety of bait from deep holes and undercut banks in small river tributaries. A 4-foot x 4-foot minnow seine stretched between two rigid poles can be used by an individual to net bait from very narrow streams. The possession limit in Pennsylvania for collected baitfish is 50.

After investing the time and effort in gathering bait, you want to keep it alive and in good shape. Always transport it in a large bait bucket with a portable aeration pump. For long-term storage, a wire-mesh live box kept in a small stream is best. However, if a suitable stream for the live box is not handy to your home, or theft of the bait and live box is a concern, then keep your bait in a large tank with an aerator run off household current—not batteries. I use a cooler and aquarium pump.—*DB.*

Cast Away

The Three Rivers Water Trail's Great Fall Fishing

by Art Michaels

"There's going to be some great fishing this fall in the Pittsburgh vicinity. The Three Rivers Water Trail, a 30-mile stretch of the Allegheny River from Freeport to Pittsburgh, will be primed for action from the 'Big Three' game fish species of the Three Rivers system: Smallmouth bass, sauger and walleye," says Commission Area 8 Fisheries Manager Rick Lorson. "Each of these species reproduces naturally and provides consistently good fishing, but this fall could prove to be exceptional."

Along with several good year classes, Lorson says, a remarkably strong 1995 year class should be providing action. "The average sizes for this strong year class this fall should be about 14 inches for walleye, 12 inches for sauger, and 8 inches for smallmouth bass," Lorson says. "Although most fish of the three species mentioned from the 2005 year class will still be below the legal length, the catch-and-release angling should be favorable," Lorson says. "Jig-and-minnow combos tend to be the preferred offering."



All in all, September and October will begin a fall season in which there's plenty of great action on the lower Allegheny River.

Another fish species that should show up strong, again from the 2005 year class, is the white bass, Lorson adds. This species also reproduces naturally. "The white bass really has boom-and-bust cycles on the river, but this should be a boom year," says Lorson. "The best area for white bass is in the lowermost pool from the Point in Pittsburgh to Sharpsburg."

Lorson says that other possible related action in this stretch could be for hybrid striped bass. The Commission manages this section with supplemental stocking of hybrid striped bass, he notes. "Several year classes of stocked hybrids should be available to anglers this fall. Lures mimicking small gizzard shad work well," Lorson says.

The Harmarville and Tarentum pools are known to provide some very good flathead catfish opportunities. Lorson says that recent fish sampling on the Allegheny River uncovered many 30-pound-plus flatheads. Lorson also revealed that channel catfish, cousins of flatheads, are also available in ample numbers in this area, and that they will still be active this time of year. These two catfish species reproduce naturally in the river. The experts use large, live river baitfish to catch flatheads.

"Other species we supplementally stock are muskies and tiger muskies," says Lorson. "Our stocking effort has intensified over the last few years, and we seem to be getting more reports of catches of these toothy predators. We manage muskies from Harmarville to Freeport. This management was refined in 2006 now to include only purebred musky stocking," Lorson says. Large lures and plugs over 8 inches long tend to take more of these fish.

All in all, September and October will begin a fall season in which there's plenty of great action on the lower Allegheny River.

Accesses, amenities

Visit the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**, to view, download and print resources on accesses and their amenities. On the left side of the web site's main page, hold your cursor over "Fish," and in the drop-down menu, click on "Fishing Near You." Click on "County Guides," and navigate to the Allegheny County map and information.

Consider also the Commission web site's species pages. Hold your cursor over "Fish" and in the drop-down menu click on "Pennsylvania Fishes." Then navigate to "Species Feature Pages."

The Outboard Survival

by Chris Gorsuch

A question that comes up often is, what tools and spare parts do I carry for my on-the-water repairs? There are those who don't carry any tools and those who carry far more than they'll ever need. I tend to carry more tools aboard now than I ever did before—perhaps in part because of an increase in the number of rampside and on-the-water maintenance stops for which I manage to get flagged down. While I'm no floating marine supply shop, friends know I carry the tools and a few spare parts with me, and with access to my cell, let's just say I've made a few on-the-water and rampside emergency calls over the years. Preparation has saved a number of fishing outings that would have ended far too soon.

The tools I carry in my kit might be considered excessive. Since most river folk like to keep their gear as light as possible, the challenge here is to create a jetter's survival kit that covers the majority of repairs that might hit while on the water and keep it to a minimum. With this in mind, here are the basic must-haves for the survival kit.

Tools

Start with a large and small adjustable wrench—one that is large enough to use on a drive shaft's brass nut. You also need an adjustable wrench small enough to get to the hardware on the intake, reverse gate linkages and other smaller fasteners on the craft. I also carry a host of open-end socket wrenches and a small set of socket wrenches that make work easier.

You'll need at least two screwdrivers. I carry a #1 and #2 Phillips along with 2 slotted screwdrivers, but the basic kit will need a #2 Phillips and a quarter-inch slotted driver. The slotted screwdriver helps unfold the wings of the keeper washer on the impeller shaft, and there are many uses for these drivers that don't require further explanation.

A pair of slip-joint and arc-joint pliers is nice to hold fasteners that slip. The arc-joint pliers make closing the wings on the keeper washer easy. They also place less stress on them and reduce the chance of breaking the wings off the washer.

A small rubber mallet comes in handy when removing the intake, liner or impeller. Depending on how



Preparation has saved a number of fishing outings that would have ended far too soon.

Jetter's Kit

photos by the author

long they have been in place, these items tend to stick. A gentle tap, side to side with the rubber mallet, will safely jar them loose.

A spark plug socket wrench can get cumbersome. Most small engine shops carry what is called a "T-wrench" multi-tool often with two different socket sizes and a screwdriver at the end of the handle. These items are both inexpensive and lightweight.

The one tool I carry that gets an odd look once in a while is a tent peg puller. The handy shape of this tool, used to pull tent pegs out of the ground, also works well removing river stones and other debris from the jet intake grill bars. Many camping and sporting goods stores carry them, often priced under $5.



SAVED BY THE JACKET

Fisherman Casts for 80-Year-Old in Life Jacket!

Wayne Stice figures that the biggest fish he ever caught was 80 years old, had on boots and wore a life jacket. He also figures that life jackets saved both his life and the life of an elderly companion.

Back in 1995, Mr. Stice stopped at a fishing store and purchased life jackets. "I had no idea that the money I spent was a life investment," said Mr. Stice. "Two years later was the payoff.

Mr. Stice and a friend were fishing at their favorite little lake. To this day the two men still can't figure out how one minute they were fishing from a boat and the next minute they were in the water. "No," explained Mr. Stice, "the boat didn't flip—we did!"

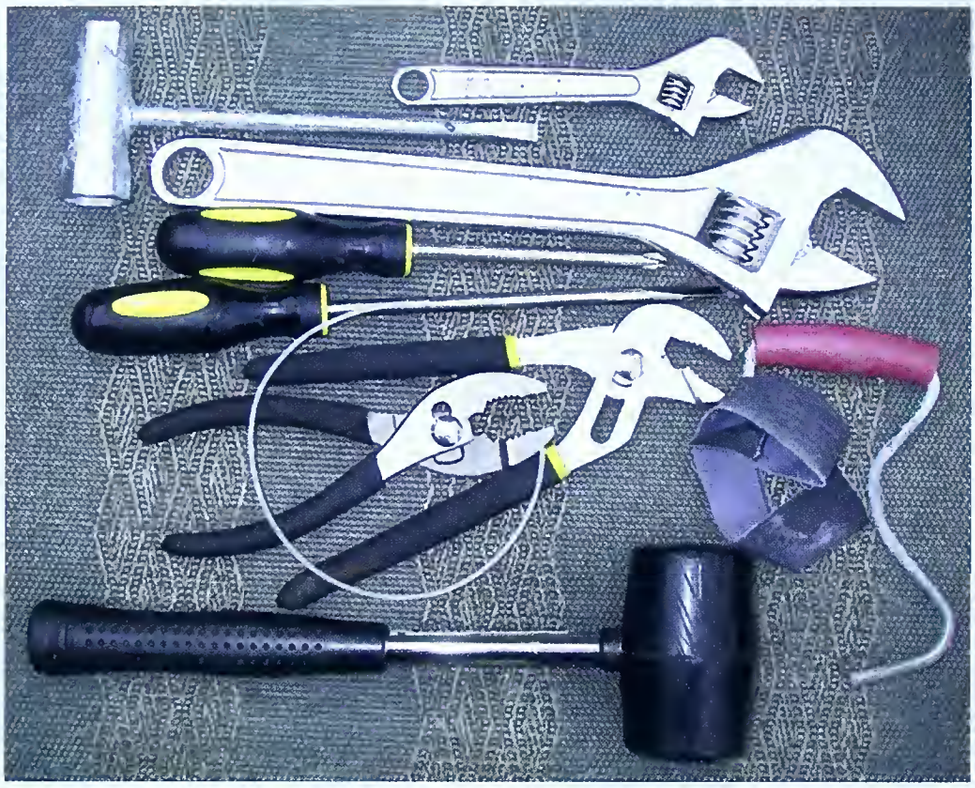
"It took a while, but I made it to shore, only to find that my 80-year-old friend was still about 100 yards away from shore."

"Thankfully, he, too, was wearing a life jacket," said Mr. Stice. "But because of the heavy weight of his water-soaked clothes and his boots, and age, his mobility was very, very restricted."

Meanwhile, the unmanned boat, half-filled with water, beached itself on shore. Wayne Stice got to the boat, hoping that he could use it to rescue his partner, but as he stepped in, the extra weight caused the boat to sink.

"I thank God for the presence of mind to throw him my fishing line. He grabbed it, and slowly I was able to get him to shore," said Mr. Stice. "It's the biggest fish I ever caught! More important, we are both here to tell this, the story of our life-saving investment."





The tools I carry in my kit might be considered excessive. Since most river folk like to keep their gear as light as possible, the challenge here is to create a jetter's survival kit that covers the majority of repairs that might hit while on the water and keep it to a minimum.

A section of emery cloth of a few inches is nice to have onboard. Carbon buildup on spark plugs and buildup on corroded wire terminals can often be fixed in a pinch with a few swipes of the emery cloth. The emery cloth is also nice in case your hook file goes missing.

Carrying about 12 inches of weed-trimmer cord may sound a bit odd, but running shallow water will cause mud, sand and other small debris to run through the water pump, and these items can often lodge in the pump's discharge tube. Mud wasps and water spiders have also tried to make their homes inside the rubber discharge tube. The weed trimmer cord is rigid enough to knock out the intruder but flexible enough to follow the contour of the tubing. It's a solid option for an on-the-water fix.

Duct tape doesn't require much of a description. I can't begin to list the number of times this simple roll of tape has saved the day.

I often make a mistake assuming that most anglers carry a pair of side cutters and a knife on their boats. But if you don't, they need to be added to your tool list.

Spare parts

I also carry a bit more in the way of spare parts for on-the-water repairs than do most other boaters. Still, a small list of spare parts would look something like this.



I carry a bit more in the way of spare parts for on-the-water repairs than do most other boaters.

Most of the items in my spare parts list are there because of a specific instance or mishap on the water.

Wiring connections tend to pick the worst times to go bad. I keep fuses on hand with electrical tape. I also keep a large fuse to replace the one in my engine if that should go when I'm on the water.

As for jet pump parts, I keep a spare impeller key handy. Should you shear one, this $2 item is priceless on the water. I also keep an extra winged tab lock washer because the wings tend to break when you remove your impeller a few times.

I keep a few spare shim washers with me because over the years I've dropped a few in the water during repairs. There will be items all boaters will add based on their own experiences. But this is a good start.

One small item I also keep on hand is about a 12-inch length of heavy gauge wire. I had starter problems once, and if I would have had such a wire, I could have jumped the solenoid to start the engine.

To expand the list, zip ties, plastic and stainless steel hose clamps, fuel line filters, spark plugs and even an extra primer bulb/ball can come in handy. Most boaters carry some kind of small rope or a few feet of cord. Friends like to keep epoxies in their kits. None that I've used had the ability to meet the needs of a true on-the-water repair, and while I have some of these products, I don't carry them onboard. Items such as these do sit in a tool box back in the truck at the ramp.

At home, I do keep an extra intake, some new and straightened grill bars, nylon sleeves and pivot pins for the reverse gate and a few intake studs because they also get bent once in a while. I don't keep them onboard because if these mishaps take place, there's little one can do on the water, and such repairs are much easier at home.

When waterway mishaps come along, having a survival kit onboard is worth it's weight in gold.

The Commission's New Habitat Management Division

by Linda Steiner

"Build it and they will come" isn't just true of fictional ballparks. Build it and "they"—fish and other aquatic life—will be there.

That is the purpose of the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's new Division of Habitat Management. The Division will help the Commission fulfill its mission of providing fishing and boating opportunities, by addressing the relationship between quality habitat and quality fishing, says R. Scott Carney, Division chief.

Although the Commission has been involved for decades in habitat improvement, this is the first time those programs and activities have been grouped under one division.

The Commission's cooperative habitat improvement programs, Adopt-a-Stream and Adopt-a-Lake, were formerly in the Division of Environmental Services, enhancing and restoring waters so they host healthier ecosystems. In the new Habitat Management Division, the Adopt-a-Stream and Adopt-a-Lake programs have been enhanced, while other programs with similar goals have been added.

"Unbuild it and they will come" could be a watchword of the third program in the new Division.

The functions of improving fish passage and removing unnecessary dams were formerly in the Commission's Division of Research. Now joined together, the Lake Habitat Section, Stream Habitat Section and Fish Passage Section are the heavy hitters of the Habitat Management Division. The trio has pennant-winning potential.

"Historically there has always been a relationship between quality habitat and quality fishing," says Carney. "Through protection and enhancement of aquatic resources, the Commission has always been active, but now we'll be more proactive."



Before: Livestock had full use of the stream corridor and vegetation was grazed low. No shading to the stream channel, many areas of stream bank erosion, little in-stream fish cover. A 2000 pre-project survey within this stretch turned up only 10 wild brown trout from 5 to 9 inches

Outgrowth of the National Fish Habitat Initiative

The emphasis on habitat comes as an outgrowth of the National Fish Habitat Initiative, in which Commission Executive Director Dr. Douglas Austen has been a principal player. Through Dr. Austen's leadership and the new Division's staff, the Commission is in the forefront, nationally, in restoring and enhancing aquatic habitats. And that translates to better fishing and stewardship of aquatic resources.

The new Division's approach includes elements of



After: Improvements included installing stream bank fencing and livestock crossings, planting native shrubs and trees to supplement the natural vegetative growth, and installing in-stream structures made of logs and stone to provide stability and aquatic habitat. A 2007 survey documented 168 wild brown trout from "young-of-the-year" fish to those over 13 inches.

photos courtesy of the Habitat Management Division

the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. The plan is a national investment strategy to make conservation dollars go further, by leveraging governmental and privately raised funds to build partnerships to fix fisheries problems. Here in Pennsylvania, the Habitat Management Division is taking the expertise of Commission professionals, identifying lakes and streams in need of habitat help, and employing various funding mechanisms to do the job.

Publicly accessible waters

Similar in purpose and policy, the Division's Adopt-a-Lake and Adopt-a-Stream programs differ mainly in the habitat needs of still vs. flowing waters. In both, projects are initiated only on publicly accessible properties, either publicly owned or private but open to the public. The Division staff works with many cooperators and partners, says Carney, such as watershed groups, angling clubs, lake associations and state and federal agencies. For adopt-a-water projects, the Habitat Management Division provides assistance in determining needs, designs the enhancements, obtains permits and, with the help of the partnering group or agency, builds and installs the structures.

Types of installations might be wooden porcupine cribs that are sunk in a lake to provide fish spawning structure. Or they might be logs anchored and angled into a creek bank, backed by rocks, to narrow, speed up and redirect flow, creating a better stream environment. Up to $2,000 is available from the Commission to groups doing adopt-a-water projects, which must be matched 1:1 by the cooperator in cash or volunteer time and effort.

"One thing we can offer," says Carney," are extremely effective methods that afford an opportunity for partners to participate, and they're low-cost."

That's a consideration for small, local organizations, which are usually long on volunteerism but short on cash. These groups often rely on county conservation districts for guidance, and the new Habitat Management Division, says Carney, will build on the capacity of the districts by providing more information and technical assistance to them.



Types of habitat structures might be wooden porcupine cribs that are sunk in a lake to provide fish spawning structure.

Privately owned waters

Waters that aren't publicly owned or currently publicly accessible are also integral parts of a watershed, and the Division offers technical assistance to enhance stream and lake habitats on private property. They provide advice and design work and explain permitting, but the Commission doesn't contribute financially from the Fish Fund or provide staff to perform the actual work, Carney says.

"This gives us the flexibility to work on some private properties, because we need to view our waterways as ecosystems," says Carney. "We can't simply go just where the public has access."

He says that funds for private landowner assistance come from federal funding, including the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, State Wildlife Grants and the Landowner Incentive Program. Working with private landowners also lets Commission personnel make contact and develop relationships, perhaps moving toward opening the water to fishing or acquiring easements.

Staffing, money

Doing all that takes staff. The complement is currently 11 full-time and four part-time employees. Envisioned is a staff of 20.

Enhancing aquatic habitats takes money, too. "As we continue to develop as a Division, we're trying to get as much 'soft' money as possible to do the work," Carney says. Traditional funding has been "hard" dollars, such as that from the Sport Fish Restoration Fund (Dingell-Johnson) and fishing license sales. "Soft" money would come from grant sources, both public and private, such as grant programs administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and others. Also important is Growing Grower funding, from the Pennsylvania departments of Environmental Protection and Conservation and Natural Resources. Although the Commission can't apply directly for Growing Greener funds, its partner organizations can.

Dam removal

Sometimes the major fix a stream needs is to remove an outdated dam or to install a fishway. The American shad comes to mind immediately, and that was Carney's former assignment, restoring historic runs by facilitating the fish's movement upstream past dams or by removing the barriers. Having a Fish Passage Section in the new Habitat Management Division is sensible, not just for shad, but for many

fish whose natural movement patterns have been interrupted by blockages.

Many small dams in Pennsylvania are a legacy of a past economy based on water power. Some are several centuries old and many have deteriorated. Through the years, silt buildup behind breastworks has destroyed aquatic habitat and filled the original pool. It's no surprise that dam removal has come into its own in recent years. As an example, Carney cites old mill dams that no longer have a purpose.



Turtle basking platforms are designed for painted turtles and redbellied turtles.

"It's difficult to justify spending $500,000 for a fishway," he says, "if the dam isn't likely to be there after the next high water event."

Dam removal is a template on how to fund other habitat projects, says Carney. More than 120 small dams have been removed statewide, with grant money generating about $5 million in state and federal funding and from other sources. Some projects have been permitted through and accomplished with nonprofit organizations like American Rivers, which has a field office in Pennsylvania. American Rivers has leveraged several million dollars so far for dam removal in Pennsylvania.

"We've been working very closely with American Rivers and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in this effort," says Carney. "We can take the ability of nonprofits to apply for grants and help move the individual projects forward."

Pennsylvania leads the nation in dam removal for stream restoration. Carney says the public is now embracing the concept and understanding the need to remove obsolete flow obstructions, resulting in healthier streams and fisheries. The Habitat Management Division and partners are currently advancing about 60 projects with over 100 requests from dam owners for assistance.

Where should we do what?

Who determines which waters are most in need of habitat work and which treatment method to use? Stepping up to the plate for that are the six regional habitat biologists the Commission is hiring. They will be grouped under the Regional Habitat Section and headquartered in the major watersheds: Upper Ohio and Lake Erie, the lower Ohio, the lower Susquehanna River, upper Susquehanna, North Branch of the Susquehanna, and the Delaware River.

Carney is enthusiastic about the role the regional habitat biologists will play. They will coordinate habitat projects at the local level, not only those benefiting fisheries, but also reptiles and amphibians, species for which the Commission has oversight. The regional habitat biologists will identify priority needs and work with area fisheries managers, established groups, such as watershed associations and conservation/angling organizations, who have local knowledge of problem areas.

"A lot of these groups want to do good things, but they don't have the capacity to do it by themselves or know where to begin," says Carney. "We'll help by doing the work necessary to get the project moving, including determining the best approach for watershed restoration, designing projects, getting the grants and permits, retaining contractors, project oversight and more."

Needy habitats

Restoration needs differ from region to region, says Carney. In western Pennsylvania, acid mine drainage is a huge problem, while in the southcentral and southeast, agriculture and urbanization affect the health of aquatic habitats. As examples of what's being done, he points to recent projects in Centre County's Spring Creek Watershed. In the southeast, dams have been removed on Pennypack Creek and hickory shad restocked. In the northwest, projects have been completed on Fourmile Creek and other Lake Erie tributaries with steelhead runs.

In the Northcentral Region, the Kettle Creek Watershed is being worked on. In the southwest, there's the effort with DEP on the Stonycreek River and other streams, the partnership with Reliant Energy to fund habitat restoration, and coordinated efforts with the Loyalhanna Watershed Association. Soon, Commission web site users will be able to pick a watershed of interest and find information on habitat work there, says Carney.

The Habitat Management Division is currently involved with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) on comprehensive projects at four state park lakes: Glendale (Prince Gallitzin State Park), Pymatuning, Sayres (Bald Eagle State Park) and Nockamixon. These projects are pilots for future work. They will be funded by DCNR, the Wild Resource Conservation Fund and State Wildlife Grant funds provided by the Commission, says Carney.

The whole idea, says Carney, is that "we want to be the leaders. When people think of aquatic habitat restoration, we want them to think of the Commission. I don't think we were thought of that way in the past, and we're changing that."

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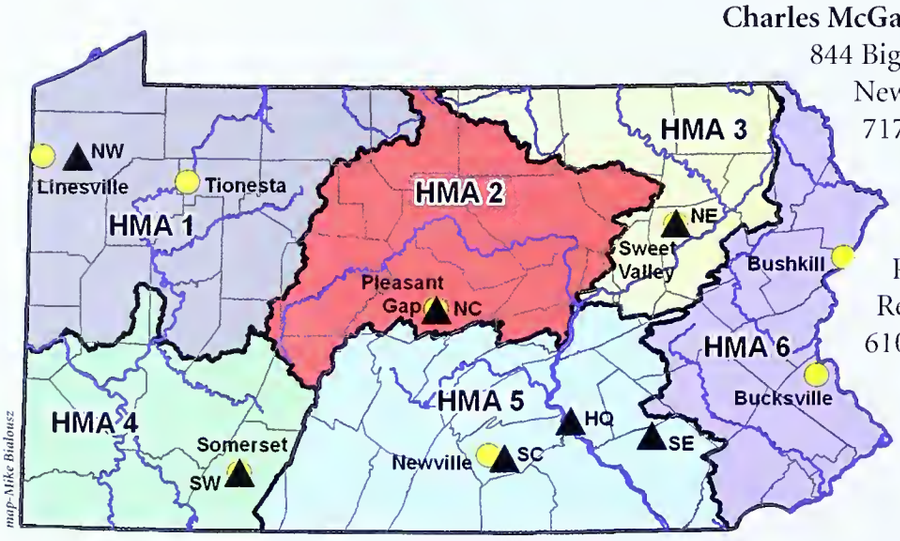
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The Prince Nymph

by Charles R. Meck
photos by the author



One of the most important guidelines for successful fly-fishing is choosing the right fly. Selecting the right pattern can make or break any fly-fishing trip.

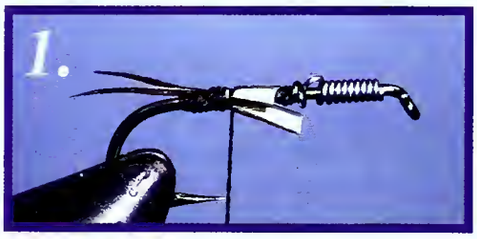
Over the years I have found that one particular wet fly I can always depend on is the Prince Nymph. For years my brother, Jerry, started off the Pennsylvania fishing season on a northwest Pennsylvania hotspot, Oil Creek, with that wet fly. That one pattern seldom failed him. The Prince Nymph is also a productive fly on just about every other stream in the state. I've found it especially productive on the Little Juniata River, Penns Creek and the Lehigh River near Lehighton.

The peacock body is part of the reason why this fly is so productive. Taper the peacock herl body so that it gets heavier from the bend to the eye. The pattern looks a lot like a Brown Hackle Peacock with the addition of goose biots. Those white biots seem to do the trick. The white biots and the dark body copy fairly closely many of the Isonychia nymphs found on the state's top trout streams.

I like this nymph to sink quickly, so I add about 10 wraps of .010 lead to the shank. That amount of weight quickly gets the pattern near the bottom. Adding weight to this fly, though, is an optional part of the first tying step.

The Prince Nymph

Hook: Size 10 to 16 nymph hook.
Thread: Black, 6/0.
Eyes: Peacock herl ribbed with gold tinsel.
Tail: Brown goose biots.
Wings: White goose biots.
Hackle: Brown hen hackle.



1. *Optionally, place about 10 wraps of .010 lead on the shank. Tie in the two brown biots at the bend. Cross the two so that they flair out to the right and left of the hook. They should extend past the bend about half the length of the shank.*



2. *Tie in two or three (depending on the hook size) lengths of peacock herl at the bend and a 2-inch piece of gold tinsel. Wind the herl forward to the eye and cut off the excess.*



3. *Rib the body three to five times, depending on the fly's size, with the gold tinsel. Tie off and cut off the excess tinsel.*



4. *Tie in the brown hen hackle by the tip just behind the eye with the hackle's dull side facing the bend. Make two or three turns around the hook with the hackle. Tie off and cut off the excess. Pull the hackle on top to the right and left sides.*



5. *Tie in the white biots so that they are about the length of the shank. Have one flair out to the right and the other to the left. Cut off the excess.*



6. *Build up the head with the black tying thread, whip finish and apply head cement.*

Fishing the Prince Nymph

by Carl Haensel

Some nymphs are tied to represent perfectly a life form of a specific mayfly. Others are more general representations of aquatic invertebrates. Some nymphs may be fished best in slower water, and some best in fast. Nymphs like the Prince that have bright peacock herl as well as biots on the body and tail can represent clinging mayflies or small stoneflies. While the Prince Nymph can catch fish in many situations, it performs very well in fast water and deep water, one location where these invertebrates live. Prince nymphs can be tied a variety of ways. To get them deep in the run of a trout stream, some anglers add lead weight to the body of the fly. Others choose to add a bead head. Prince nymphs with a heavy bead head that is a bright brass color can perform well in cloudy or off-color water.



photo-Justin Torok

Chunky wild trout, like this nice brown trout, are much more likely to take a well-drifted nymph than a dry fly. Get your nymphs deep to see what you can find in PA's larger trout waters.

Drifting nymphs deep

Drifting a nymph deep in a rocky run can catch some of the biggest fish on a trout stream. However, it can be a challenge to get your fly to sink deep enough so that it actually passes by the fish and not a few feet over its head. Using additional weight attached to your tippet is almost always needed. A strike indicator is a good tool to show where your fly is moving in the run. Using flies that are tied with weight on the body or with a heavy bead head can help to get down quicker. If you want to fish the deepest run on a trout stream, start by fishing its edges. Never ignore the water close to you, or the water between you and where you think the big fish are. Sometimes large fish can edge up to the side of a deep run or hole without an angler even noticing them. Beginning by casting directly to the deepest part of the run first—and directly over fish—can spook them for a long period. If you've fished the close water, your next step is to get comfortably close to the deep water. Deep, fast water is hard to fish when you're far away from it. Also, it's tough to get a good hook set on a trout in a run if you're not close to it. In some western waters, anglers fish only a few feet from themselves, with what seems like pounds of weight on their line. While huge amounts of weight are rarely needed in the east, the close, deep drifts can be used very effectively on our eastern waters as well. When you make your cast to the top of the run, start as far upstream as you can. This allows the maximum amount of time for your nymph to sink before the fish. Keep as much line off the water as possible to avoid drag, and to enable a short, sharp hook set. Raising your rod tip high or "high sticking" your drift can help. You should set the hook immediately any time your strike indicator and fly stop on the drift. You'll either have a snag—or maybe the biggest fish of the day.

Swinging nymphs

If you have the dead-drift presentation down pat, this is a technique that you can add to the end of your cast. If you can't make a dead drift to save your life, a swinging nymph may get you fish when nothing else does. As a rule, wet flies were originally fished on a swing, and the Prince Nymph works great for this use.

Begin your swing by casting straight across the stream or river. You may choose to use a moderate amount of weight, or none, depending on the depth of the water you're fishing. Mend your cast so that your line floats at the same speed as the current, just the same as in a dead drift. As the end of your dead drift approaches, let the fly swing across the current until it's directly below you. Then let it hang there in the current for a few seconds before casting again.

Fish will often bite just as you begin to cast again. More than one time I've "cast" a small trout up to the top of a run because it bit just as my nymph finished a swing.

REFLECTING ON THE WATER
Secrets of the Clarion River

by Ron Kuhn

illustrations by the author

Tractor-trailers passed the old Cherokee as the two men motored along I-80. Jack always enjoyed the drive along "eighty" as it traversed the northern half of Pennsylvania because some of his favorite places to camp and fish were located nearby along the route. The old four-wheel-drive motored along, carrying Jack and his Uncle Gene with camping and fishing gear stashed in the back. Jack thought about the kids and regretted not bringing them on this trip. Just out of Brookville they headed north on PA Route 36 toward Clear Creek State Forest. They planned to spend the night at Clear Creek before paddling and fishing on the Clarion River to Cook Forest State Park, where they would spend Saturday night.

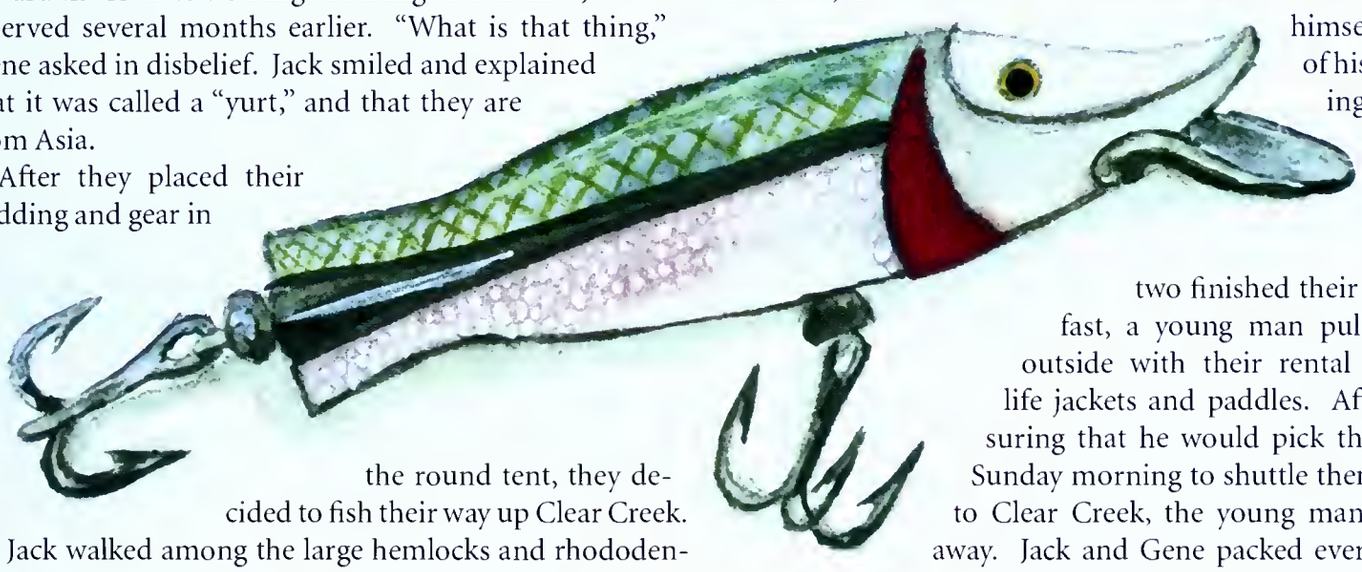
After checking in at the park office, they drove down toward the river to a strange-looking shelter that Jack had reserved several months earlier. "What is that thing," Gene asked in disbelief. Jack smiled and explained that it was called a "yurt," and that they are from Asia.

After they placed their bedding and gear in the round tent, they decided to fish their way up Clear Creek. As Jack walked among the large hemlocks and rhododendron, he glanced back toward his uncle. Gene always had more patience than anyone Jack ever knew. He would fish a stream section after someone had abandoned it and catch and release several fish. Jack smiled as he worked his way toward Phyllis Run, taking in the color of the occasional brightly colored leaf as it flowed past on its way to the Clarion.

After several hours the two men hiked back down to their shelter for the night. Gene lounged on his bunk while Jack heated a large can of beef stew on his camp stove. Jack laughed to himself as he thought back to his days in the Boy Scouts when the group of boys decided to pack over 12 pounds of canned beef stew several miles into camp. This weekend he would be traveling downriver like the men had done many years before, floating logs to sawmills. Weight didn't matter as much as when he backpacked.

While the beef stew simmered, Jack realized that his uncle was starting to drift off to sleep. Jack raised his voice, "Stew's ready," as Gene sat upright. "How long was I out?" Gene questioned. "Three days," Jack said, waiting for his uncle's reaction. After tearing up some bread and placing it in the bottom of their bowls, the two sat in their yurt eating warm beef stew while they discussed their canoe trip for the next day.

The Clarion flowed past the state park as the two men snored the night away. In the morning Jack awoke about 6 o'clock, and after setting a pot of coffee on the stove, he climbed back into his warm sleeping bag. Usually Jack would start a campfire, but today he was taking it easy with the use of his green propane stove. As he poured two cups of coffee, Gene scratched the back of his head and pulled himself out of his sleeping bag.



As the two finished their breakfast, a young man pulled up outside with their rental canoe, life jackets and paddles. After ensuring that he would pick them up Sunday morning to shuttle them back to Clear Creek, the young man drove away. Jack and Gene packed everything into waterproof bags and loaded their gear into the canoe at the river's edge.

As the two paddled down river, Jack wondered how many archery hunters were in the Allegheny National Forest to their right. Gene cast toward the bank with one of Jack's new rubber minnow lures. "You have this thing working the way you want it to?" Gene asked with an unsure look on his face. "I'm still working on it," Jack said. "It still doesn't seem like it swims naturally." Gene tried several other lures until he found a crayfish plug to his liking.

As they paddled downriver they would fish for trout in the areas around the tributary streams. Jack decided to keep enough fish for dinner that evening, so they kept the larger bluegills and trout that they had caught. Several mergansers darted along the shore as the canoe cut through the water. This trip would take only about five

hours, so they decided to fish both sides of the river. Gene was getting up in age, so he couldn't sit as long as he used to. He had one of his hips replaced years earlier because of all of the tree-climbing he did as a part-time tree trimmer. Jack decided to pull the canoe up on shore at the mouth of one of the streams on the northern side of the river.

"Do you want to fish this small stream," Jack asked his uncle. "Sure would," Gene said as he stretched his legs. Jack headed upstream as usual as his uncle patiently worked the first pool. Jack found fresh bear tracks in the sand where a bruin crossed in the last day or so—Jack would be heading north the week of Thanksgiving to hunt bear just as he had since he was younger.

Jack sat on a large rock and watched the stream cut its way down toward the river as he ate a ham and cheese sandwich. Gene worked his way upstream as Jack thought about the kids. He was having a great time, but he couldn't wait to get home to the kids. Gene sat on the rock next to his nephew and told him a story about a stone axe his grandfather had found while they were constructing the camp at Clear Creek.

"Camp was hard work, so when they had spare time, they'd explore the area around camp," Uncle Gene said. Jack thought back to a time when men lived in canvas tents and worked the earth into many of the areas we enjoy in Pennsylvania today. "He was walking along the river bottom in late spring looking for morel mushrooms when he saw a stone with a groove on its side."

Jack realized his uncle was talking about a stone his grandfather always used as a doorstop in his bedroom. After pulling it out from the dirt and brush, he decided to clean it off in the river, and after cleaning it he realized that the year 1752 was carved into the groove.

Jack asked his uncle why he thought the stone axe had that year carved into it, and he explained that his dad thought that a trapper found the axe and decided to inscribe the date on it, only to lose it again to the earth.



As Jack pushed the canoe out into the river, he thought of all the people who hunted, fished and trapped along the Clarion River.

In the middle of the afternoon Jack and Gene reached their cabin at Cook Forest State Park. Even though Tom's Run is known to have plenty of trout between its banks, Gene decided the two should hike to the Forest Cathedral area to see some of the old-growth hemlocks.

Saturday evening brought broiled trout and bluegills with fried potatoes and onions—much tastier than soup from a can, Jack thought to himself. Tomorrow the shuttle van would pick them up and take them back to Clear Creek. Jack sat and enjoyed the campfire in the cabin fireplace, missing the kids and Beth as Gene started to snore. Tomorrow would take Jack back to the kids and bring an end to yet another trip.

Official Pennsylvania Water Trails

The Clarion River Water Trail project began in 2004 and was made possible by a partnership of the PA Fish & Boat Commission, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Allegheny National Forest and PA Game Commission. The local community also provided significant support and input. Water trail maps are available at local canoe liveries and other businesses, and they can be viewed, downloaded and printed by visiting the Commission's water trail pages on its web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**.

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission is the sole agency that designates official Pennsylvania water trails. However, individual trails and trail corridors are created and maintained by a network of volunteers, property owners, civic groups and associations. If you or your organization would like to create a water trail, or if you'd like to nominate an existing water trail for recognition as an official Pennsylvania water trail, contact the Commission by calling 717-705-7800 or on the web at **http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/inform.htm**.



Gifford Pinchot State Park

by Alice Stitt



Pinchot is a perfect place for introducing people to fishing. Its plentiful panfish population makes success practically a certainty.

photo-Art Michaels

Nestled between the ridges of northern York County, Gifford Pinchot State Park is an "all seasons" park with varied activities for every visitor. The park, with more than 2,000 acres, averages 600,000 visitors annually. The 340-acre Pinchot Lake is an angling and boating delight.

Through a land purchase by the Commonwealth in 1959, this park—named after the Pennsylvania governor, forester and conservationist Gifford Pinchot—was formally dedicated in 1961 by Governor David L. Lawrence. Surrounded by ridges on all sides, it is a quiet and secluded area that takes one closer to nature. It offers many recreational options from fishing, boating and camping to swimming, hiking and disc golf.

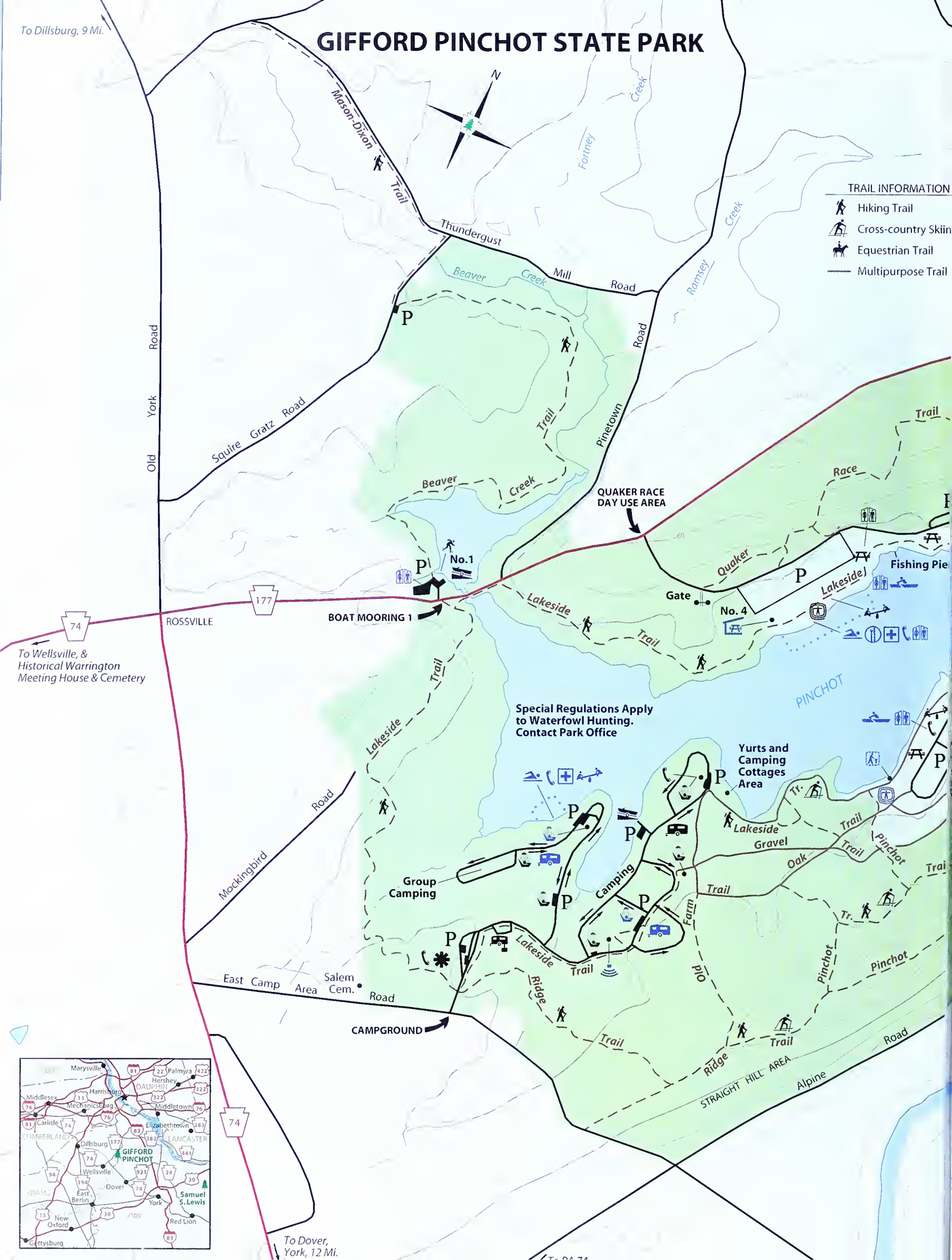
Pinchot Lake is a warmwater fishery with an average depth of only 6 to 8 feet. The lake features gravel bars and porcupine cribs, as well as other manmade structures that have been added to enhance the habitat.

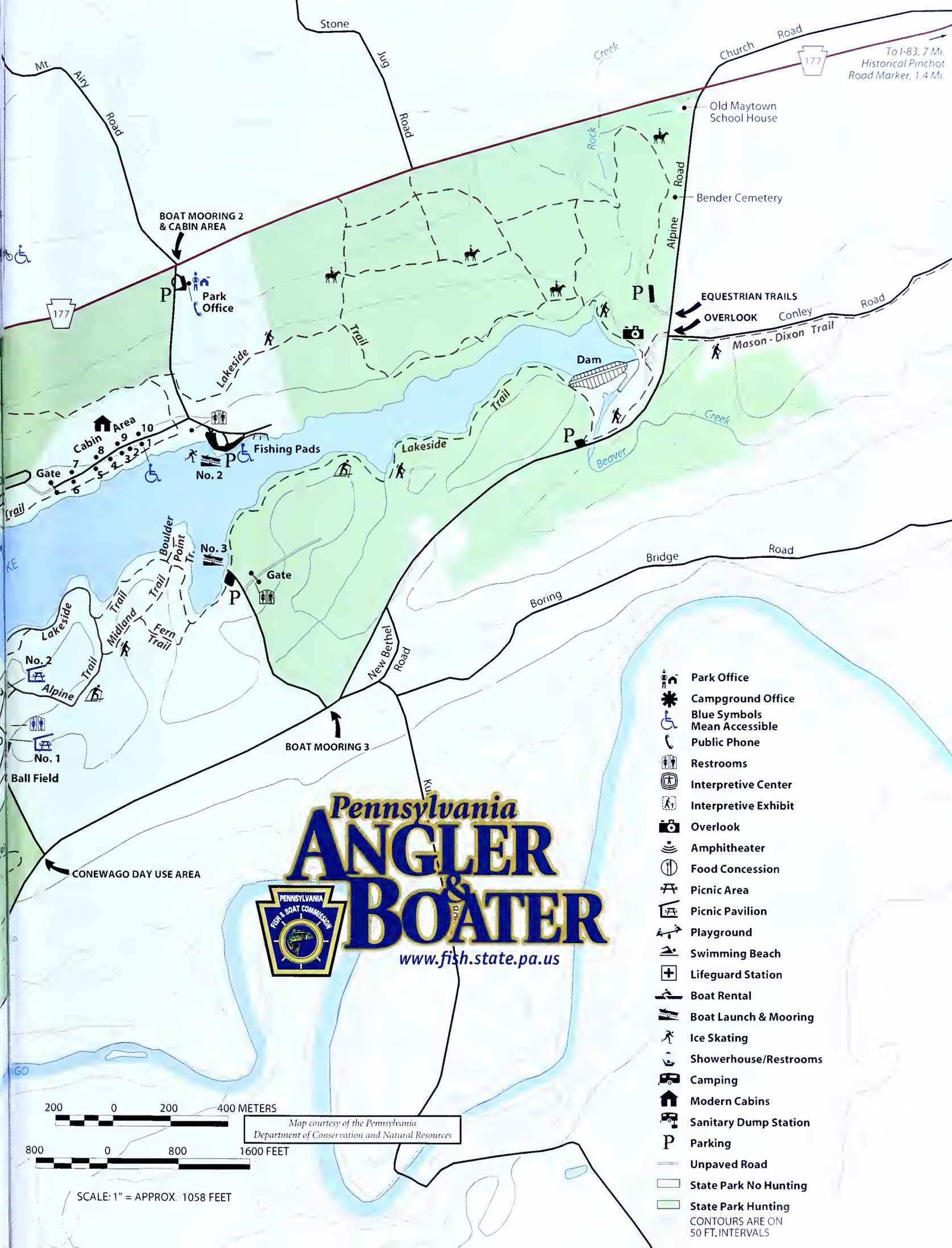
The lake has a good population of panfish, including bluegills, pumpkinseeds, sunfish and crappies, which can be caught from shore or from a boat. Anglers know that the area around the dam and in some of the deeper pools gives them the best chance of landing some good-sized crappies. Largemouth and smallmouth bass are found throughout the lake. Some 5-pound largemouths have been taken, and even larger hybrid striped bass in the 7- to 12-pound range have been caught there. Walleyes, catfish and carp are also popular quarries.

Overall, bass and panfish are the big draw for anglers. These fish are caught throughout the year and provide steady action. Shore fishing is good—there is access to almost the entire shoreline for bass and other fish. Stripers can be caught most

(article continued on page 34)

GIFFORD PINCHOT STATE PARK




Stone
Jug
Road
Mt.
Airy
Road
Creek
Church
Road
177
To I-83, 7 Mi.
Historical Pinchot
Road Marker, 1.4 Mi.
Old Maytown
School House
Rock
Road
Bender Cemetery
Alpine
Road
BOAT MOORING 2
& CABIN AREA
P
Park
Office
177
EQUESTRIAN TRAILS
OVERLOOK
Conley
Road
Mason - Dixon Trail
Dam
Lakeside
Trail
Area
Cabin
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
Gate
Fishing Pads
No. 2
Lakeside
Trail
Creek
Beaver
Trail
Boulder
Point
Tr.
No. 3
Gate
Bridge
Road
Boring
Lakeside
Trail
Midland
Trail
Fern
Trail
No. 2
Alpine
Trail
New Bethel
Road
BOAT MOORING 3
No. 1
Ball Field
CONEWAGO DAY USE AREA
Pennsylvania
ANGLER & BOATER
www.fish.state.pa.us
PENNSYLVANIA FISH & BOAT COMMISSION
Park Office
Campground Office
Blue Symbols
Mean Accessible
Public Phone
Restrooms
Interpretive Center
Interpretive Exhibit
Overlook
Amphitheater
Food Concession
Picnic Area
Picnic Pavilion
Playground
Swimming Beach
Lifeguard Station
Boat Rental
Boat Launch & Mooring
Ice Skating
Showerhouse/Restrooms
Camping
Modern Cabins
Sanitary Dump Station
P Parking
Unpaved Road
State Park No Hunting
State Park Hunting
CONTOURS ARE ON
50 FT. INTERVALS
200 0 200 400 METERS
800 0 800 1600 FEET
Map courtesy of the Pennsylvania
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
SCALE: 1" = APPROX. 1058 FEET

often around boat mooring area #2. Live bait as well as artificials are typical offerings.

Park manager Bill Rosevear revealed that there are some "really big fish" in Pinchot Lake. He knows of one veteran angler who has repeatedly caught some very nice muskellunge. Big bass are also taken at the yearly bass tournaments, some in the 20- to 25-inch range. "It's all in how you fish for them," says Bill.

One bass angler, who said he had been coming to the lake since he was 12 years old, discovered that the gizzard shad that inhabit the lake are a help to him when fishing for hybrid stripers. "They come to the surface in a school, and you can tell they are being chased. That's when I drop down a silver spoon and land a big one," the angler said. Pinchot Lake is part of the Big Bass Program.

Fishing from a boat is your best approach when traveling between the lake's hotspots. The lake is governed by electric-motors-only regulations. Anglers can be seen fishing from a variety of craft, from bass boats to kayaks to rowboats and canoes. There are also handicap-accessible fishing pads located near boat mooring #2.

The three boat accesses on Pinchot Lake provide 24-hour access. The most popular launch is #2, midway on the lake. It is located off of PA Route 177 and has a large parking area and a restroom. Launch #3 is located on the opposite side of the lake from launch #2, off of Alpine Road. It has a small parking area and restrooms. Boat launch #1 is more isolated at the southwestern and most shallow end of the lake. This shallow section is connected to the main part of the Lake by a narrow channel. Many paddlers choose to use this launch for a more quiet area to view wildlife. In addition to the launches, there are more than 286 shoreline mooring and canoe rack spaces that may be rented from April 1 to November 1. The mooring areas include many larger spaces designed to accommodate sailboats and pontoon boats.

If you don't own a boat, the park has several types of boats for rent, including paddleboats, canoes, kayaks, rowboats and boats with electric trolling motors. The two boat rental areas are located at the Quaker Day-Use Area and the Conewago Day-Use Area.

PA Fish & Boat Commission and Department of Conservation & Natural Resources rules and regulations apply for all the park's fishing and boating and other activities.

With more than 300 campsites, Gifford Pinchot State Park provides one of the Commonwealth's largest state park campgrounds. The campsites are open the second Friday in April and close by the end of October. They can accommodate tents or recreational vehicles. There are also camping cottages and yurts available for rent, and a large area for organized group tent camping. The campground has a swimming beach, boat launch and mooring area as well as modern bathhouses, toilets and showers. In addition, 10 modern cabins, located near the park office and boat launch #2, are open for rental year-round. Reservations are required for all sites.

During the summer, the park hosts many events and activities including rowing regattas, competitive sailboat races, bass tournaments and triathlons. The environmental education staff also has a schedule of programs including pontoon boat tours, natural history and interpretive events, nature hikes, and guest speakers. Check the park's calendar of events to see what is happening on the weekends as well as during the week.

Note that sometimes crowds can be a challenge to both anglers, boaters or other park visitors. Mornings and evenings and mid-week may be your best bet to visit the park if you don't want the hustle and bustle of the weekend traffic.

Wintertime doesn't slow the visitors to Gifford Pinchot State Park. Ice fishing, ice skating, ice boating, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing all take place during winter at Pinchot.

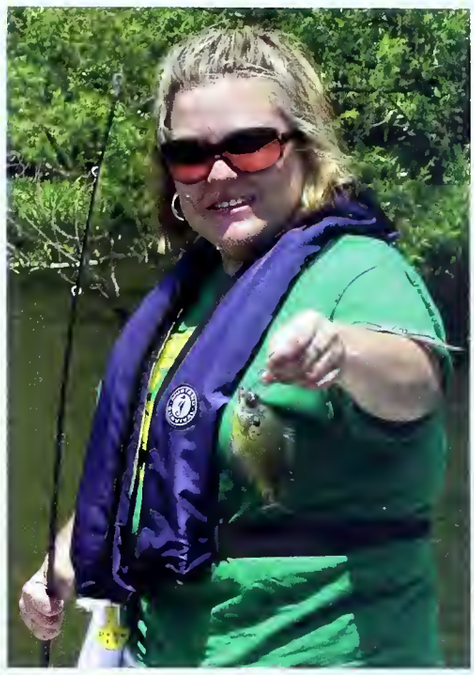


Photo: Alice Stitt

When ice conditions permit, ice fishing for largemouth bass and crappies is a popular pastime. The park reports that the ice can sometimes reach thicknesses of a foot when the temperature drops below freezing for days at a time. And with over 18 miles of marked trails, wintertime visitors with snowshoes, skis or hiking boots have much to explore.

Gifford Pinchot would be proud of this state park named in his honor. With over 2,000 acres for visitors to explore, a beautiful and sheltered lake for fishing and boating, many picnic areas, miles of trails, and ample and modern camp sites, it is obvious why visitors return year after year to enjoy the whole host of activities at Gifford Pinchot State Park.

More Information

Visit the park online and check state park regulations at **www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/giffordpinchot.aspx**, or contact Gifford Pinchot State Park, 2200 Rosstown Road, Lewisberry, PA 17339-9787; campground office: 717-292-4112; park office: 717-432-5011; email: giffordpinchotsp@state.pa.us.

For general state park information or to make reservations, call toll-free: 1-888-PA-PARKS, Monday through Saturday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

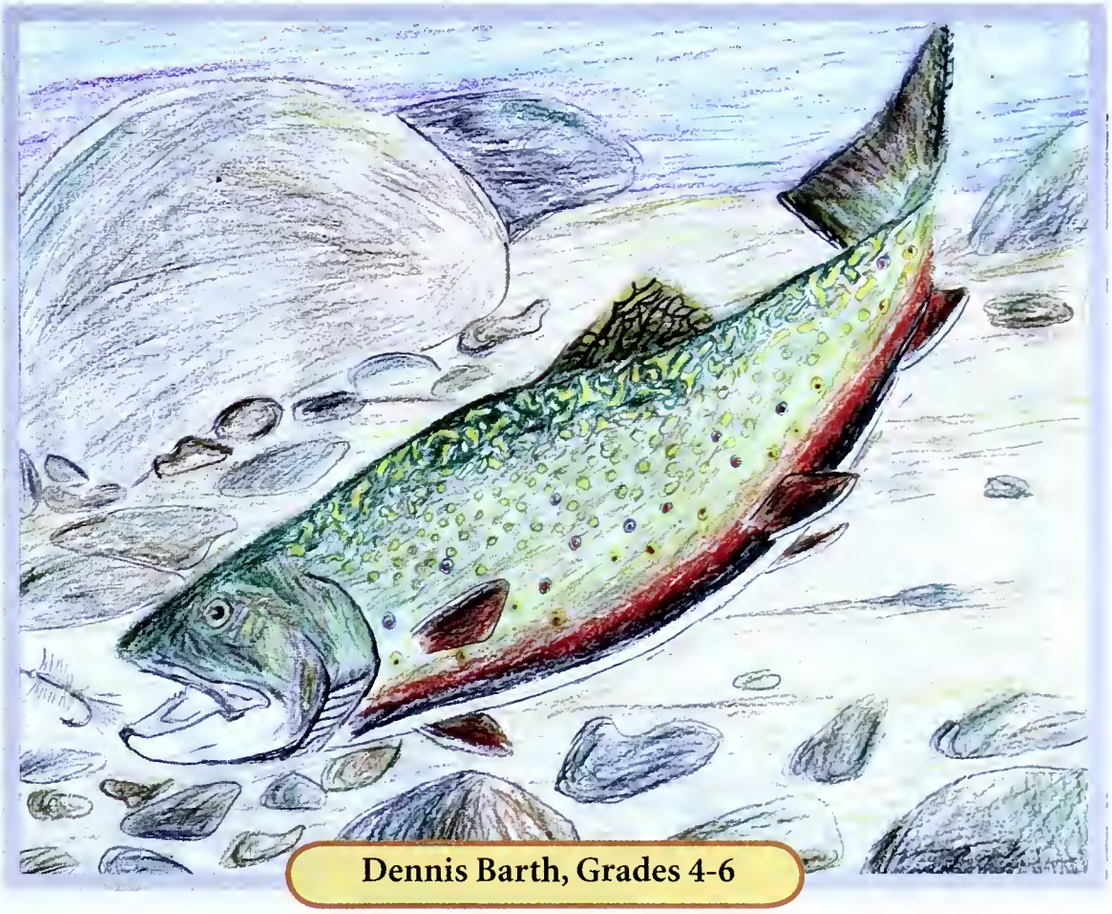
2007 State-Fish Art Contest Winners

The Pennsylvania winners of the 2007 State-Fish Art Contest are:

Dennis Barth
Grades 4-6

Evan Martin
Grades 7-9

Kyle Kozar
Grades 10-12



Dennis Barth, Grades 4-6

The State-Fish Art Expo last July at Bloomington, Minnesota's Mall of America featured the winners of the 2007 State-Fish Art Contest in an enormous art display. Included were the works of the three Pennsylvania winners, and an awards ceremony honored all the winners.

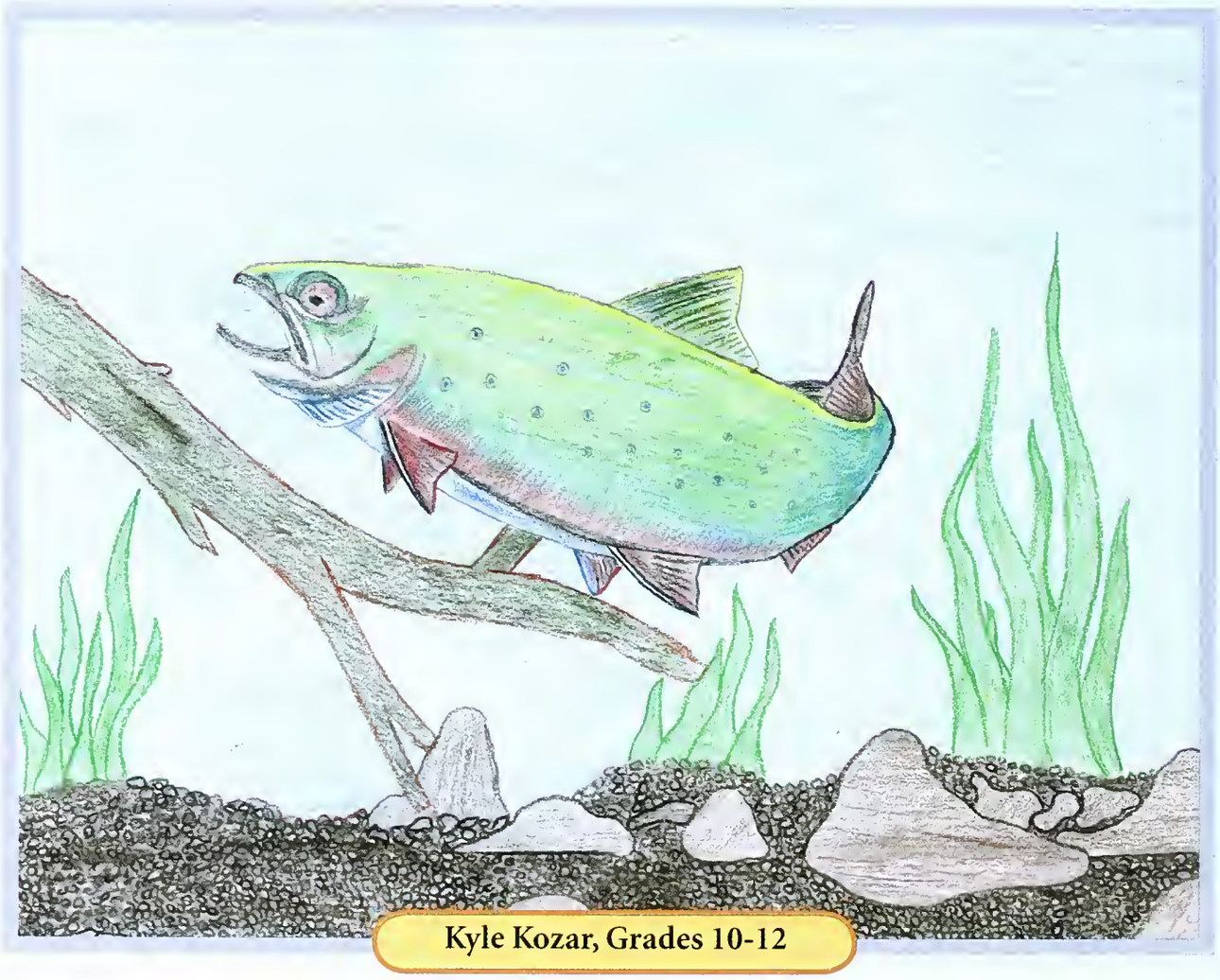
The contest included some 2,385 entries nationwide with 121 Pennsylvania entries in all categories.

Located in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota, Wildlife Forever is a non-profit multi-species conservation organization dedicated to preserving America's wildlife heritage. Pennsylvania is a partner agency in the contest. The State-Fish Art Contest requires students in grades 4 through 12 to depict their official state fish and provide an essay on that fish's characteristics, behavior, habitat or efforts to conserve it. Pennsylvania's official state fish is the brook trout.

Contest rules and regulations appear in this issue on the preceding page, and an entry form follows the artwork. The winning artists' works can be viewed on the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**. Winning artwork from Pennsylvania and from other states can be seen on Wildlife Forever's contest site, **www.statefishart.com**.



Evan Martin, Grades 7-9



Kyle Kozar, Grades 10-12

2008 State-Fish Art Contest

HOW TO ENTER:

Completed portfolios must be postmarked by March 31 of each year.

Portfolios must include:

❑ A completed entry form.

❑ Artwork of participant's state fish.

❑ One-page composition about participant's state fish, its habitat, behavior or efforts to conserve it. The composition must include the student's name and address.

❑ Entry forms are also available by calling **toll-free 1-877-FISHART (877-347-4278)**. Please allow two weeks by mail. Entry forms will not be accepted by email. Please download or print the entry form at **www.statefishart.com** and send via regular mail.

❑ Entry forms must be completed, signed by a parent or guardian, and glued to the back of the original artwork.

❑ ***Completed entries should be mailed to:***

Wildlife Forever State-Fish Art Contest
2700 Freeway Blvd. #1000
Brooklyn Center, MN 55430

RULES & REGULATIONS:

- The State-Fish Art Contest is open to children in grades four through twelve attending public, private, or home-schools in the United States. Only one entry per child will be accepted.
- Portfolios will be judged on the quality of the artwork.
- The artwork must call attention to the official fish of the entrant's home state. PA's official state fish is the brook trout. The fish must be depicted in its natural habitat. Information about each state fish is available at **www.statefishart.com**.
- All artwork must be the contestant's original, hand-done creation. Photographs and computer-generated artwork will not be accepted.
- All artwork must be 8.5"x11" and horizontal, without a mat, frame, cover sheet, or border. Art techniques may include scratchboard, pointillism, chalk, charcoal, dry brush, watercolor, crosshatch, lead, collage, linoleum printing, or crayon. Please note: If contestants use chalk, charcoal or lead, they should seal the artwork with an adhesive.
- All artwork must not exceed 1/4-inch in total thickness.
- No lettering, signatures, or initials may appear on the front of the design. Any artwork with such identifying characteristics will be disqualified and eliminated from the competition.
- Completed portfolios must include a typed composition or theme paper not to exceed one page in length. Compositions should relate specifically to the characteristics of the state fish, its habitat, behavior, or efforts to conserve it. The composition **must** include the student's name and address.

The "Art of Conservation" Stamp Award

Each year, Wildlife Forever will select one design from all the entries for an interesting, useful and attractive fish stamp. Criteria for selection of the award follows:

- All rules, regulations and deadlines of the State-Fish Art Contest apply.
- The state fish should be the dominant feature of the design and the habitat must be appropriate for your species and state.
- Designs may include fishing-related items.
- Keep the design simple. The image will be reduced to create a stamp.
- Color will be given priority over black and white.
- **Do not** make the design look like a stamp. No numbers or design elements are allowed.

PRIZES:

- All contestants will receive a certificate of participation.
- Three winners from each state will be selected on Earth Day of each year—one winner per grade group (4-6th, 7-9th, 10-12th) for a total of 150 winners (50 states x 3 winners = 150).
- All winning designs will be displayed at the State-Fish Art Expo in the summer.
- All winning designs will be online at **www.statefishart.com**.
- Visit "Prizes" at **www.statefishart.com** to catch the latest information about prizes for the Wildlife Forever State-Fish Art Contest.

THE FINE PRINT:

- The State-Fish Art Contest is not open to the immediate relatives of Wildlife Forever employees or participating sponsors.
- It is the student's responsibility to inform Wildlife Forever of any change of address.

Wildlife Forever:

- Has the right to use the name of any State-Fish Art contestant without compensation.
- Retains ownership of all artwork entered in the contest. In order to promote the Wildlife Forever State-Fish Art Contest, products such as posters, prints, T-shirts, etc., may be produced from winning artwork. Any money realized from the sale or licensing of the artwork will be used to support the contest, wildlife conservation, and education initiatives. The winning artists must provide autographs without charge to Wildlife Forever.
- Will return all other entries upon request after August 31 of the contest year, if the student provides a self-addressed 10"x13" envelope.
- Reserves the right to destroy unclaimed entries after one year.



PA's State Fish—Brook Trout

- Will not insure entries it receives or be responsible for loss or damage of the entries.

WILDLIFE FOREVER STATE-FISH ART CONTEST ENTRY FORM



Important for Teachers:

If part of a classroom project, please fill out teacher and school information before duplicating and distributing to students. Duplicate and glue to back of artwork.

Entries addressed to:
Wildlife Forever, State-Fish Art Contest
2700 Freeway Blvd. #1000
Brooklyn Center, MN 55430

Entry Deadline: Must be postmarked by **March 31, 2008**
Winner Announced: **Spring 2008**

Grade	❑ 4th ❑ 5th ❑ 6th	❑ 7th ❑ 8th ❑ 9th	❑ 10th ❑ 11th ❑ 12th
Check one:	Group I	Group II	Group III

Pleose print or type

Contestant _____
Lost Nome *First Nome* *Birthdote*

Home Address _____
Street or PO Box

_____
City *Stote* *Zip*

Telephone ( ) _____ ( ) _____
Home *Porent Doytime*

Art Entry Title _____

Essay Title _____

Fish Species _____

Art Medium Used _____

Composition Title _____

School and Teacher Information:

Teacher's Name _____ ( ) _____
School Phone

Name of School _____

Street Address _____

City/State/Zip _____



I hereby certify thot this is my originol work ond thot it is not o copy of published photogrophs, mogozines, book illustrotions, or other moteriols protected by copyright lows. I understond thot Wildlife Forever ond other sponsors ore not responsible for loss or domoge to my ortwork and/or composition. I gront exclusive right to Wildlife Forever and its designees to utilize my artwork ond/or composition for reproduction ond promotionol purposes ond to disploy my ort. Also, I ogree thot my ortwork ond/or composition moy be used, oltered, or published os they see fit without compensotion to me.

Signature of Student _____ ***Date*** _____

Signature of Parent, Guardian or Teacher _____ ***Date*** _____

Entry questions should be directed to **brichardson@wildlifeforever.org** *or by calling toll-free* **1-877-FISHART**.
Artwork must be 8.5" x 11" HORIZONTAL and no more than 1/4-inch thick. Do not mat or frame.
Do not have lettering or borders on the front. Visit ***www.statefishart.com*** *for full list of entry guidelines.*



Wakes Can Make More Waves Than You Think

by Art Michaels

photos by the author

Boats can be downright dangerous when it comes to wakes, and that danger includes both creating a harmful wake and receiving one. A wake, of course, is the wave a boat creates underway as it displaces water. Whether you're on your way to a fishing spot, just cruising or heading in from the action, you could be endangered by another boat's wake, and you might even put another boat in peril by your own wake.

Regulations, commonly called the "100-foot rule," require boaters to operate at a slow, no-wake speed within 100 feet of the shoreline, docks, launch ramps, swimmers or downed skiers; persons wading in the water; anchored, moored or drifting boats; and floats. And throughout Pennsylvania, many areas are posted as slow, no-wake areas. Other boat operation regulations also relate indirectly to the damage a wake could cause. Still, the best way to minimize the wake dangers is to take a close look at your boat and the wake it could create, and examine where you boat and the kind of boating you do. In this way, in addition to observing the law, you can take steps not to give or to receive a damaging surge.

False assumption

One common mistaken idea about wakes is that we sometimes equate wake size with boat speed. In other words, if you're moving along at 30 mph, you have to be creating a huge wake. This notion isn't always true because a craft's weight, size, hull design and hull displacement determine its wake characteristics.

For example, when some boats plane at high speed, they barely touch the water's surface. These boats create a small wake at high speeds. But a large boat, perhaps with a heavy high-horsepower engine whose stern rides low in the water while the bow angles upward, could create a damaging wake even at slower speeds.

Even though boat wakes are just like other waves that constantly strike boats, docks, bulkheads and shorelines, boat wakes have special characteristics that can make them dangerous. Waves are measured from the crest (top) to the trough (bottom). The height of a wave is called its amplitude. Boat wakes, like other waves, can also be measured by the distance between crests. This measurement is called frequency. Waves are also measured by how fast they are moving—the wave's speed.

High seas on Lake Erie or the Delaware Estuary in blustery or stormy conditions, for example, can produce waves with enormous amplitude—height. But these waves have low frequencies—great distances between onslaughts. These kinds of waves are also relatively slow-moving. Most waves produced by the tide, for example, move at less than 10 mph.

Dangerous surge

On the other hand, a destructive boat wake travels at the speed of the boat, and damaging wake frequencies are often high. The combination of a wake's high speed and high frequency makes it dangerous. The damage occurs when a wake slams a boat in rapid succession, the waves hitting the endangered boat's hull at the top of each crest, where the surges exert the most force. The wake pummels the boat, as does a boxer who decks an opponent with combinations of rapid, well-placed blows.

Congested areas are the most hazardous for creating and receiving wake damage. In fact, one or two boats are rarely involved in wake problems. When four or five boats are under way in the same direction, either in the same path or in different places, you often don't see an oncoming wake, and some wakes combine their forces to do damage. The combination of waves to create a stronger force is called resonance.

Another problem area is an inlet bordered by bulkheads or rock walls. The walls act as mirrors for wakes, creating multiple high-frequency surges and cross-chops that have no lessening in their strength. Add tricky currents and the area could be even more dangerous. Docks, moored boats, and shorelines in these areas can be damaged by strong wakes.

In crowded situations, overtaking wakes often create a special problem. Suppose, for example, you're under way slowly or holding a position where other boaters are moving faster. Most boaters in this situation get their stomachs in their throats when the overtaking wake slams their craft on the beam, and you don't necessarily have to be in a small boat, either! Of course, as a small boat gets lifted sideways, it can take on water over the gunwales, and the wake can toss unsuspecting occupants overboard. If if a wake doesn't toss small-boat occupants out of a boat, boaters can be injured in the boat with bruises and broken bones from a wake's flinging them around.



The best procedure to avoid damage when you're moving through a wake is first to slow down. If you slam a wake while you're thundering along, you could damage your boat and endanger your passengers because your speed is added to the wake speed in combined force. When you slow down, steer quartering into the wake.

Avoiding damage

The best way to handle an overtaking swell in a larger, heavier boat, if you can maneuver, is to put your boat stern into the oncoming surge. The wake then spirals under the boat from stern to bow, after which you get back to what you were doing. However, this situation is more dangerous for smaller boats, those with a low transom and little freeboard. In this case, a cresting wake could pour over the transom, swamping the boat. The safest course for handling an overtaking wake in a small boat is to come about and quarter the bow into the oncoming surge.



The main problem with wakes in any situation is that it's so hard to see whose wake is about to jar your boat. Wakes move somewhere between 20 and 40 degrees from an imaginary line through a boat's middle from stern to bow, so the culprit is often hundreds of yards away before his wake bashes your boat.

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Lake Erie, the Three Rivers and the lower Delaware River are dangerous places in Pennsylvania for wake damage from large, commercial ships, such as freighters, tankers and barges. These ships can create large wakes that can easily bat around even large recreational craft, let alone swamping smaller boats. On these waterways these ships have the right of way, so stay well out of their way and remain alert for commercial traffic.

Finally, there is no criminal charge for making wakes outside of special slow, no-wake zones. However, small boat or not, you could be held civilly responsible for the damage your wake causes. The best approach for all boaters is to slow down—remember the 100-foot rule, and keep a sharp lookout for other boaters' wakes.

For More Information Visit the Commission web site's pages on boating safety and education. On the left side of the Commission web site's main page, at **www.fish.state.pa.us**, hold your cursor over "Boat," and in the drop-down menu click on the topics that interest you. Consider taking a boating course and earning a Boating Safety Education Certificate. You could involve the whole family in this activity. For this information, in the drop-down menu click on "Boating Safety & Education."—*AM.*



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Fall Foliage & Trout

by Marcus Schneck

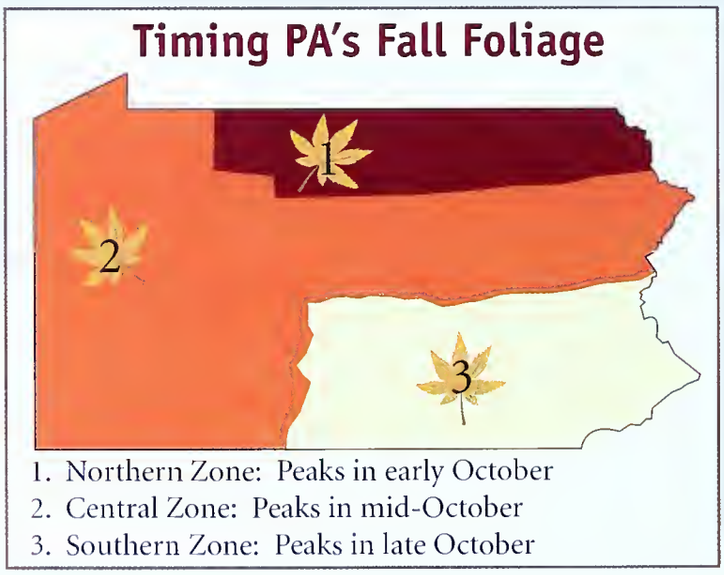
Fall brings some of the most brilliant natural colors of the year to the Pennsylvania landscape. Sure, there are the changing leaves of deciduous trees, taking on their fall colors in a gradual north-to-south flow across the state: The reds of the oaks, the yellows of the hickories, the maroons of the crabapples. But less obvious are the brook and brown trout in their bright, fall spawning colors.

My 14-year-old son's schedule of soccer, hunting, canoeing, Boy Scouting, school and fishing in waters other than those that hold trout have prevented a repeat outing for fall trout. Nevertheless, he still talks about the magnificent brook trout he pulled from English Run in Lycoming County one autumn afternoon six years ago. He still recalls the dazzling red dots along the sides of the 5-inch salmonid, the bright-orange belly and fins.

Combining the two very different elements of spawn-colored bright with fall-painted leaves in one fall outing makes for a naturally colorful experience for the whole family.

Timing is essential for the perfect fall foliage/trout trip.

Brook trout spawn mid-September through November. Brown trout spawn a little later than brook trout, when water temperatures drop into the mid- to upper 40s.



1. Northern Zone: Peaks in early October
2. Central Zone: Peaks in mid-October
3. Southern Zone: Peaks in late October

Peak fall color usually slides across a northern zone of northern Wayne County and all of Susquehanna, Bradford, Tioga, Potter and McKean counties in early October; a central zone from southern Wayne and Pike counties across the central third of the state to Fayette, Greene and Washington counties, in mid-October; and a southern zone of counties south and east of a line through southern Monroe, Dauphin, Bedford and southeastern Somerset counties, in late October.

Summer and fall conditions vary from year to year and lead to variations in timing and intensity of fall leaf colors.

Extremely hot, dry weather in summer, for example, generally will both lessen the brilliance of the fall foliage and move the peak of coloration forward by a week or so, according to Marc Abrams, a Penn State professor of forest ecology and physiology who for two decades has studied how seasonal precipitation and temperature influence the timing and intensity of fall colors. On the other hand, warm temperatures persisting into September can delay the display. And once fall has arrived, cool nighttime temperatures in the high 30s or 40s, bright sunny days and little rainfall will lead to the best fall color.

Several web sites are available to help us all track the fall foliage as it progresses each year. Some of the best are **www.fallinpa.com**, **www.fs.fed.us/news/fallcolors** and **www.foliagenetwork.com**. The third of those, provided by The Foliage Network, is the most detailed and accurate. It's based on weekly reports from more than 500 on-the-ground spotters September through November.

Whenever the fall foliage peak occurs, it's a prime time for some great family fishing photography. "Hero shots" of smiling kids and parents hoisting a fresh-caught, brilliantly colored trout for a second before releasing it back into the stream really pop with a background of bright red, orange and yellow trees. That same trout photographed briefly before return to the water on a bed of brightly colored leaves is a similar treat for the eyes.

When you're taking quick photos of a fish to be released afterward, it's essential to plan your shot to limit the amount of time the fish is out of water. Look for the background of bright foliage ahead of time. Have the kids gather the beautiful red and yellow leaves, and arrange them before the fish is hooked. Young kids will have as much fun gathering the leaves as fishing for the trout, but the whole thing will blend into one happy experience.

Although trout tend to eat less during the spawn, they also become quite aggressive and will occasionally strike anything they perceive to be an intruder on their personal space for spawning.

On larger, more popular streams, they've also been fished over by angler after angler spring through summer, and that can leave them a bit skittish. That can be compounded by water that is low, slow and ultra-clear, and a considerable amount of debris (leaves, twigs and the like) at times choking the surface of that water.

Smaller mountain streams and sections of larger streams under special regulations, such as the Commission's Catch-and-Release, Delayed-Harvest and Trophy Trout programs, can be less problematic in that respect. The Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**, pro-

vides an abundance of leads to such waters, in forms like interactive county maps that show all waters and boating access areas and extensive, descriptive listings of things like wild trout streams.

Regardless of the angling pressure earlier in the year, in the fall on nearly all these waters the pressure is really off. It's not uncommon to have whole stretches of streams to yourself, and that's a very good thing for a family fishing experience. There'll be plenty of room for the kids to fish a bit and then take a break for a bit of splashing, sloshing and looking under a few rocks.

As we move farther into the fall, the most promising fishing time will slide later into the day. While temperatures maintain something close to summer patterns, the trout will feed best from dawn through mid-morning. As daytime temperatures slip below 50 degrees, noon through late afternoon will be the prime time for angling.

Also, until the first hard frost, grasshoppers and beetles provide a substantial portion of many a trout's diet, and imitations of those or even the real things will be effective enticements for the fish. Minnows and small crayfish are also important food items at this time.

Finding the right combination to help the kids catch a few fish is central to any successful family fishing experience, but to the exclusion of all else. Jumping into and rolling around in a pile of brightly colored leaves is still one of the delights of childhood. Just be sure to check very closely later for ticks.

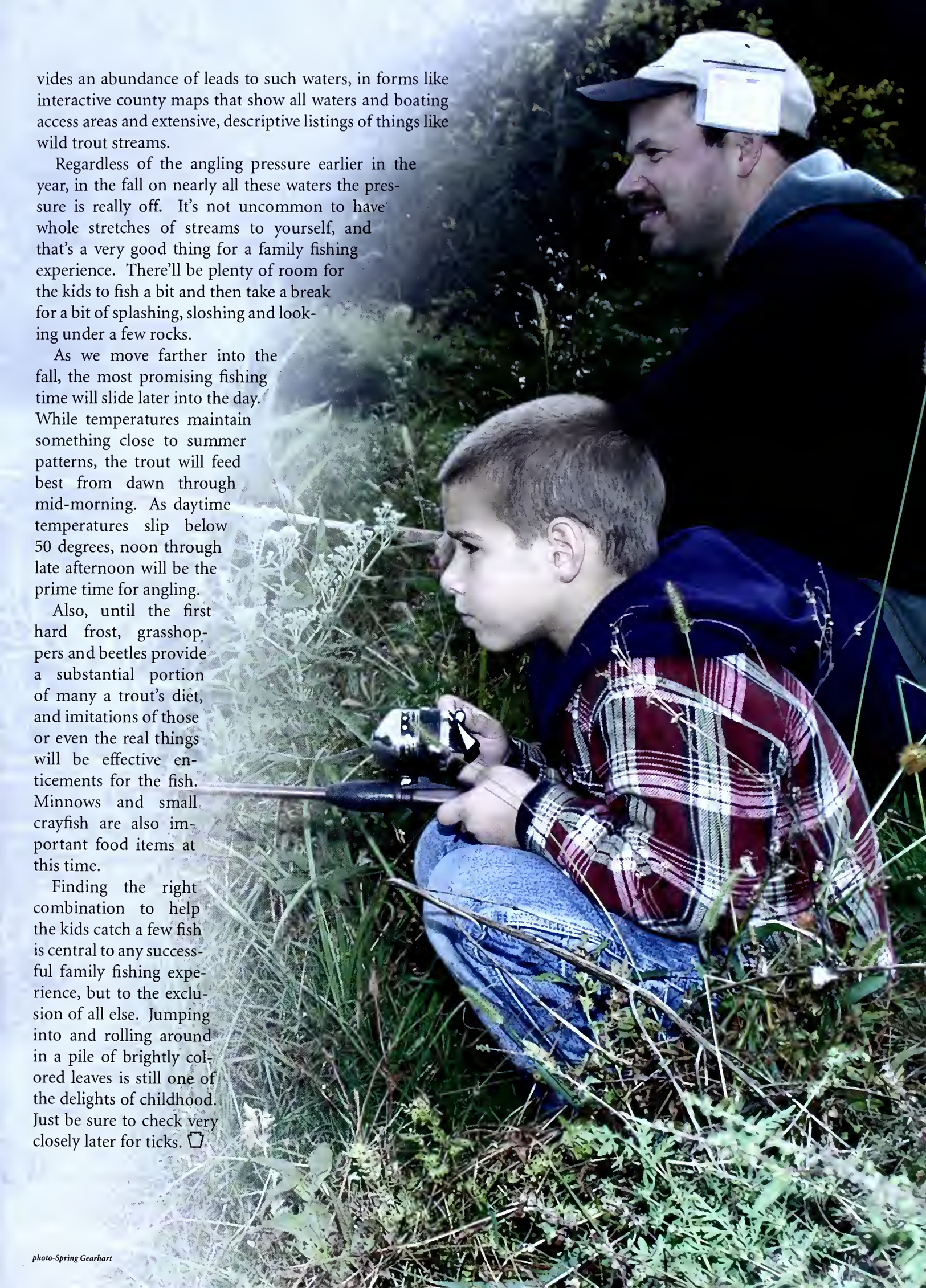
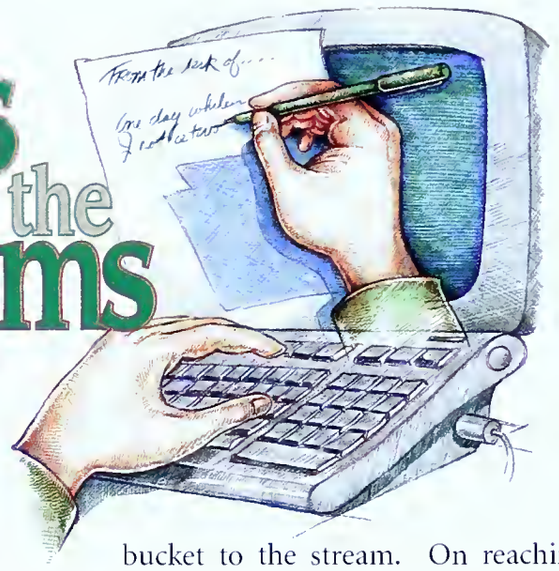


photo-Spring Gearhart

Cadet Notes from the Streams



Fool's gold frog

On a field trip, the 18th WCO (waterways conservation officer) Class visited the I-99 highway project in Centre County. We were learning about Pyrite, which is holding up the completion of the interstate. Pyrite is a yellow to brown mineral sulfide, commonly referred to as "fool's gold." When exposed to air and water, this mineral creates sulfuric acid, which in turn causes acid mine drainage.

As we were examining the station that collects the acid mine drainage and separates the toxic metals from the water, Cadet Ryan and I noticed a frog and some water bugs in the clean water discharge. After several attempts, I finally captured the critter. Because we are well-versed in identifying reptiles and amphibians, we determined that this frog was a female green frog. We also knew that this frog was not in season, so we released it immediately unharmed.

The most surprising aspect of this whole operation was that the separation of the metal from the water is working—because the aquatic life we found in the water was thriving.—*Cadet Jeremiah D. Allen.*

Priceless

While stocking trout in Potter County during field training, a young boy about six years old approached the stocking truck to carry a bucket of fish. He was handed the first bucket from the truck. I saw the boy having trouble carrying the bucket because of the weight and his size. I offered my assistance to help him carry the bucket to the stream. On reaching the stream I set the bucket down and removed the lid to reveal a brown trout that was at least 20 inches long. The young boy's eyes widened and he yelled, "Look at that!" The look on his face was priceless. That's a memory I will remember for a long time.—*Cadet John G. Hopkins.*

Better than ever

This year the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission announced that it would begin stocking "bigger and better" trout. In fact, the overall size of the average trout is 30 percent bigger than in years past. After spending several weeks stocking trout in Centre, Somerset and Cambria counties, I can say that the trout are indeed much larger than I have ever seen stocked before. Many of the volunteers helping to stock have commented on how big and healthy the fish are this year. I think it will be a very satisfying and successful trout season this year.—*Cadet David A. Hurst.*

Everything to offer

As a WCO cadet, we are given the opportunity to go to other parts of the state as part of our field training. I have never been to the southwest part of the state before, and I was looking forward to getting out and exploring the countryside. This is a part of Penns Woods that is truly a sight to see—from rolling hills with open farmland where I would see flocks of wild turkey almost every day to deep valleys that hold some of the best trout fishing in Pennsylvania. We are fortunate to have these natural resources to enjoy today and to protect for the generations of tomorrow. Whatever outdoor recreation you are looking for, southwest Pennsylvania has it.—*Cadet Darrin W. Kephart.*

Evening well-spent

The 18th WCO Class decided that with the coming of spring and summer, it was time to take up a new hobby. So many of the cadets decided it was time to take up fly-fishing, and where better to start than in our own backyard. Many of the evenings after class you could find the bank of Spring Creek lined with anglers. Some of the individuals among these anglers were members of the 18th Class. There is no better way to relax in the evening at Stackhouse than to head to the creek and enjoy nature and the evening batch of flies. Everywhere you look, the fish are rising and the cadets have a great time trying to hook the many trout in Spring Creek. There is no better stress reliever and way to spend your time at H.R. Stackhouse than finding yourself a spot along the bank of Spring Creek in the evening. There are many lessons to learn in life, and some of these lessons can't be learned in the classroom. They are learned in nature. Where there is no apparent teacher, each of us learns from the experiences we have in the great outdoors.—*Cadet Gregory R. Kraynak.*

Great day

One Saturday afternoon I decided to take a fishing trip to my local lake (Northmoreland Park Lake) for a little rest and relaxation after a tough week at the training school. Shortly after arriving, I was about to wet my line when I met an old friend who invited me to his daughter's fishing party at a nearby pavilion. This friend (knowing I'm a WCO cadet) asked if I would like to help get the group of 10 children aged 7 to 10 started fishing. I accepted, thinking that this couldn't take too long. I was wrong! By the time I finished, it was two hours later.

I had put countless worms, maggots and minnows on hooks, untangled at least four different lines, rigged several lines with new hardware, and released countless fish without ever casting. I had things to do, so I ended up leaving without ever taking my hook off the eyelet. Some people might have been disappointed, but I think that was a great day of fishing.—*Cadet Douglas H. Kunkle.*

Precious resource

Spring Creek seems to be a very popular spot here in Centre County. It really did my heart good to see a whole busload of students arrive at Fisherman's Paradise and spend the day fly-fishing, having a picnic, and just having a good time along this stream. More schools should take advantage of our outdoors and get their youth interested in the resources the state has to offer. My hat is off to the adults who care enough to give of their time for such a precious resource, our children.—*Cadet Robert A. Plumb.*

Career choice

As cadets of the 18th WCO Class, we are faced with many challenges in our year-long training program. With weekly exams, daily physical training, assignments, and the almost seemingly endless ways in which our performance is evaluated, we have a very busy schedule at the H.R. Stackhouse School of Fisheries Conservation and Watercraft Safety. In addition to the academic side of this year, there is the personal sacrifice made by the 10 cadets by being away from our families, wives and children for these 52 weeks, including some holidays. But as we venture toward the end of our training, it is clearly apparent to all of us that the weeks have gone by fast, and we thank our families for their care and support. This year is a testament to just how much we will continue to dedicate ourselves to this job long after we graduate from our training school. There aren't many careers today that demand this kind of environment for training, and it's sound proof that all 10 of us truly love conservation law enforcement—what we have selected to do with our careers.—*Cadet Brendan J. Ryan.*

Teenage volunteers

WCOs are always looking for help when it comes to stocking, so while on field training in Erie, it was a welcome surprise to be greeted at our meeting point by a group of teenagers who wanted to lend us a helping hand. The teenagers helped a great deal and they enjoyed the experience so much that they volunteered to help us at an in-season stocking later in the year. To the kids who are looking for a fun activity on a day off from school, check the stocking list for your local streams and come out to help us if you can. I am sure you will have a good time.—*Cadet Jeffrey R. Sabo.*

Essential equipment

While pre-season stocking Bessemer Lake in Lawrence County, I learned a lesson firsthand about the value of an optional piece of a WCO's equipment inventory. Trout are stocked occasionally directly from the truck by attaching a long hose to the truck so that the trout are "piped" directly into a waterway. Of our 11 stocking helpers, an elderly gentleman donned his waders and ventured off the access ramp into about 18 inches of water to maintain the outlet end of the flexible pipe in the water. Everyone was enjoying the morning and what was obviously a ritual activity for the assembled group.

In short order our ambitious helper lost his balance and fell into the water. Now sitting in the water almost up to his neck, he struggled to get up as his peers had a good-natured laugh. We are taught a rescue sequence of "reach-throw-row-go," so initially a fish net was extended to him. However, this proved futile and the next two options weren't viable choices. I waded in, grabbed our hapless helper and assisted him to his feet.

Suffice it to say that I had pushed our otherwise outstanding field boots beyond the bounds of water repellency. I finished my day with wet boots. My field training officer WCO Joe Morris was good enough to loan me his boot dryer. Early in my career I have learned that a boot dryer is essential to maintain a dry and motivated WCO.—*Cadet Jeffrey L. Schmidt.*

18th WCO Class Patch

Proceeds from patch sales are used by each WCO class to improve the PFBC's training facility and to purchase equipment used to train waterways conservation officers and deputies.

Price	Quantity	Total
$4.71	_____	_____
PA residents add 6% (29¢ each) State Sales Tax		_____
Shipping & Handling 1-5 Patches **Add $ .75** 6-10 Patches **Add $1.30** 11-15 Patches **Add $2.00** 16-20 Patches **Add $2.60**		_____
	Total	_____

Make check or money order payable to: 18th WCO Class. Send orders to: H.R. Stackhouse School, 18th WCO Class, 1150 Spring Creek Road, Bellefonte, PA 16823. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

4-inch patch



THE RED-SPOT

by Andrew L. Shiels

"Newt"! It's a word that conjures up images of fairy tales and witchcraft. Who hasn't read at least one children's story in which a fairy tale character has been turned into a newt? Likewise, one of the oft-quoted favorite ingredients in the fabled witches brew is "eye of newt." Thus, from childhood we've come to associate newts with otherworldly characteristics. In this case, it may be well-deserved because newts are indeed unusual creatures. In Pennsylvania, the red-spotted newt (*Notophthalmus viridescens viridescens*) is very common. In fact, it has been recorded from almost every county. Pennsylvania is about at the center of this species' range in eastern North America. The red-spotted newt is perhaps our most recognized and often seen salamander.

Newts are relatively easy to identify, although there are distinct differences between adults and juveniles. Adult newts are olive-green on top and light to golden-yellow on the underside. Many small black spots or speckles are distributed all over the body. The "red-spotted" portion of the name comes from the six to 20 red or orange spots encircled by black halos, arranged in two rows along the back. Adults range in length up to 6 inches.

Juvenile newts are known as efts or red efts. They live on land for several years and are often a vivid orange color. The bright-orange coloration makes them stand out on the forest floor. However, their bright color is actually a warning to would-be predators that they are toxic and distasteful. In shape, they resemble smaller versions of the adults. Also, even though they are typically bright orange, they still show the spots encircled by black halos. Efts are small and range in length to about 2.5 inches. Newts that are in the process of changing from juveniles to adults are referred to as transformers, and they basically have the shape and size of the juvenile but their coloration gradually darkens from bright orange to olive. Depending on the stage of their transformation, they can be a light olive or orange-brown.

Newts exhibit a unique and complex life cycle. Life for a red-spotted newt begins in an aquatic habitat. Newts may breed in ponds, marshes and small lakes from fall through spring. As many as several hundred eggs are deposited in the spring, attached individually to submerged vegetation. The eggs hatch in around 30 days. The larvae are fully aquatic and emerge from the pond in about two months to begin life on land. When they leave the pond their gills are resorbed and they develop lungs. At this point they are called efts. Efts live a land-based existence for one to two years and then return to the water to live life as an adult and eventually breed. When they metamorphose into adults, they retain their lungs and remain air breathers. This alternating of habitats and the physiological processes needed to exist in such diverse environments are unique in the animal world. Scientists continue to study newts to learn about the complex physiological processes that must take place to allow these transitions.

Newts occupy a variety of habitats. Adults can be found in temporary ponds, streams, shallow lake edges, swamps and bogs. In the spring and fall, newts can often be seen suspended in the water column just below the surface. This is particularly true in bog areas or ponds, which are relatively acidic and have few or no fish that prey on them. Efts prefer woodlands and may roam miles from water. They inhabit leaf litter and live under the cover of rocks, fallen logs and decaying bark. Newts eat small invertebrates, worms and insects, which they find among the leaf litter. Efts are most often seen during damp conditions on spring or late summer/early fall mornings following a rainfall or heavy dew. At times they seem to be everywhere on the forest floor. There have been many observations over the years of newt "marches," or migrations. They typically occur during the early fall. They are most likely a movement of efts toward ponds or lakes where they will begin their transformation into adults.

Newts are associated with forested areas. The large areas of forested habitats that remain in Pennsylvania are crucial to survival for most of our other salamander species. A majority of our salamanders require forested habitats and the cover, soil moisture, humidity and diversity of foods and microhabitats that they provide. As organisms that are always in contact with the soils, rocks or waters of the Commonwealth, they are also among the first species to be adversely affected by habitat disturbance or pollutants.

Soil moisture is important to the survival of efts because it aids in decomposition of leaf litter, which provides habitat for the newt and its prey. Moist conditions aid in respiration through the skin, which occurs in addition to lung breathing. Drying or elimination of forested areas reduces or eliminates the population of newts in an area.

ted newt

Good forest conservation practices benefit newts and other woodland salamanders.

Newts are unique in their ecology and life history. No other Pennsylvania salamander begins life as an aquatic larva with gills, becomes an air-breathing, land-dwelling juvenile with lungs, and then returns to an aquatic existence. The red-spotted newt and all other salamanders are members of the Class Amphibia, which also includes frogs, toads and caecilians. There are some 400 salamander species in the world with nine families, 24 genera and over 125 species residing in North America. Pennsylvania is home to five families, 11 genera, and 22 salamander species. On the global and continental scales, Pennsylvania contains an impressive diversity of salamanders and represents an important crossroads of habitats and species assemblages.

In the case of the newt, the real story is perhaps more interesting than the fairy tales. Even though they don't possess mystical powers, their way of life is indeed mysterious and worthy of our attention. In a way, it is paradoxical that a species so common can be so complex. Many Pennsylvania amphibians and reptiles have equally interesting stories.

For more information on the red-spotted newt and all of Pennsylvania's amphibians and reptiles, visit the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**. On the main page's left side, hold your cursor over "Non-game Species" and navigate to "Amphibians & Reptiles."



illustration-Tom Duran Jr.

2007 PFBC Photography Contest

Entry Deadline: December 31, 2007

The 2007 Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Photography Contest is intended to foster a greater appreciation for Pennsylvania's fishing and boating, and aquatic resources.

Contest winners will receive a certificate, the limited-edition magazine 75th anniversary patches, and the limited-edition 2007 nongame species patch. Honorable mention winners will receive a certificate and the limited-edition year 2007 nongame species patch.

The contest now includes a "best in show" selection from all category first-place winners. The best in show winner receives a framed 1991 trout stamp poster. The Commission began issuing trout/salmon stamps in 1991.

Winning entries and honorable mentions may appear in a contest feature article in a future issue of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater*. All entries may also be used elsewhere in the magazine, on the magazine's cover, in Commission publications, on the Commission's web site, and in Commission exhibits and other projects.

The contest will run from March 2007 through December 2007.

View the results of the 2006 contest by clicking the contest link on the Commission web site's main page, at www.fish.state.pa.us.

RULES

- The contest is open to amateur photographers (anyone who makes less than half one's annual income from taking and/or selling photographs).
- Commission employees and volunteers and their immediate family members are not eligible.
- Entries must be original works taken in Pennsylvania, on waterways with public access, and they must have been taken by the person entering the contest.
- Entries must also show adherence to Pennsylvania fishing and boating laws and regulations.
- In photographs, all boaters and anglers in boats must be wearing properly fitted, buttoned and zipped life jackets. It's encouraged that children on shore near the water should wear life jackets.
- Entrants are responsible for securing photo releases from identifiable subjects.
- Entrants may submit only mounted 35mm color slides, color prints in sizes 3 1/2"x5", 4"x6", 5"x7", or 8"x10", or unmounted medium-format and large-format transparencies.
- All submissions must be in color–no black-and-white photos.
- No mounted, over-matted, framed or glassed prints will be accepted.
- Retouched or electronically manipulated entries are not allowed.
- Please do not send negatives or digital files.
- Each photo must include the entrant's name, address, phone number, location of the photograph including county, species identification (if applicable), and category, in addition to a fully completed official entry form on this page for each category entered.
- Multiple submissions are allowed, but participants are limited to a total of two entries per category.
- The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission shall have the right to digitize and use all submissions for publishing, illustration, World Wide Web display, advertising, trade, exhibits and promotion, and in any other use in any medium for any purpose whatsoever without compensation.
- Winning entries (1st, 2nd or 3rd place) from previous Commission photography contests are not eligible.
- Entrants who want their materials returned must include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with the right amount of postage and appropriate packaging to safeguard materials. ***Submissions that do not include return envelopes and postage will not be returned.***

Photo Contest Entry Form

www.fish.state.pa.us

Complete this form with each entry and mail to: PFBC Photo Contest, PA Fish & Boat Commission, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000. The deadline for the Commission's receiving entries is December 31, 2007.

Please Print Clearly

Entrant's Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail (if available): _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Categories

- ❑ 1. Seasonal Fishing and/or Boating (main focus on activity with seasonal backgrounds (snow, ice, fall leaves, etc.)
- ❑ 2. Family Fishing and/or Boating (emphasis on two or more family members)
- ❑ 3. Young Anglers and/or Boaters (photos of anglers and/or boaters less than 12 years of age)
- ❑ 4. Waterway Scenics (Impoundments) (lakes, ponds and reservoirs)
- ❑ 5. Waterway Scenics (Flowing Waters) (rivers, streams and creeks)
- ❑ 6. Reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates (animal closeups or photos with the animals as the primary subject)

I received this form from (check one):

- ❑ *PA&B* magazine
- ❑ the Commission's web site
- ❑ Photo dealer
- ❑ Other (specify) _____

This form may be photocopied.

Dedicated to the Memory of Commissioner Enoch S. "Inky" Moore Jr.

PLAY

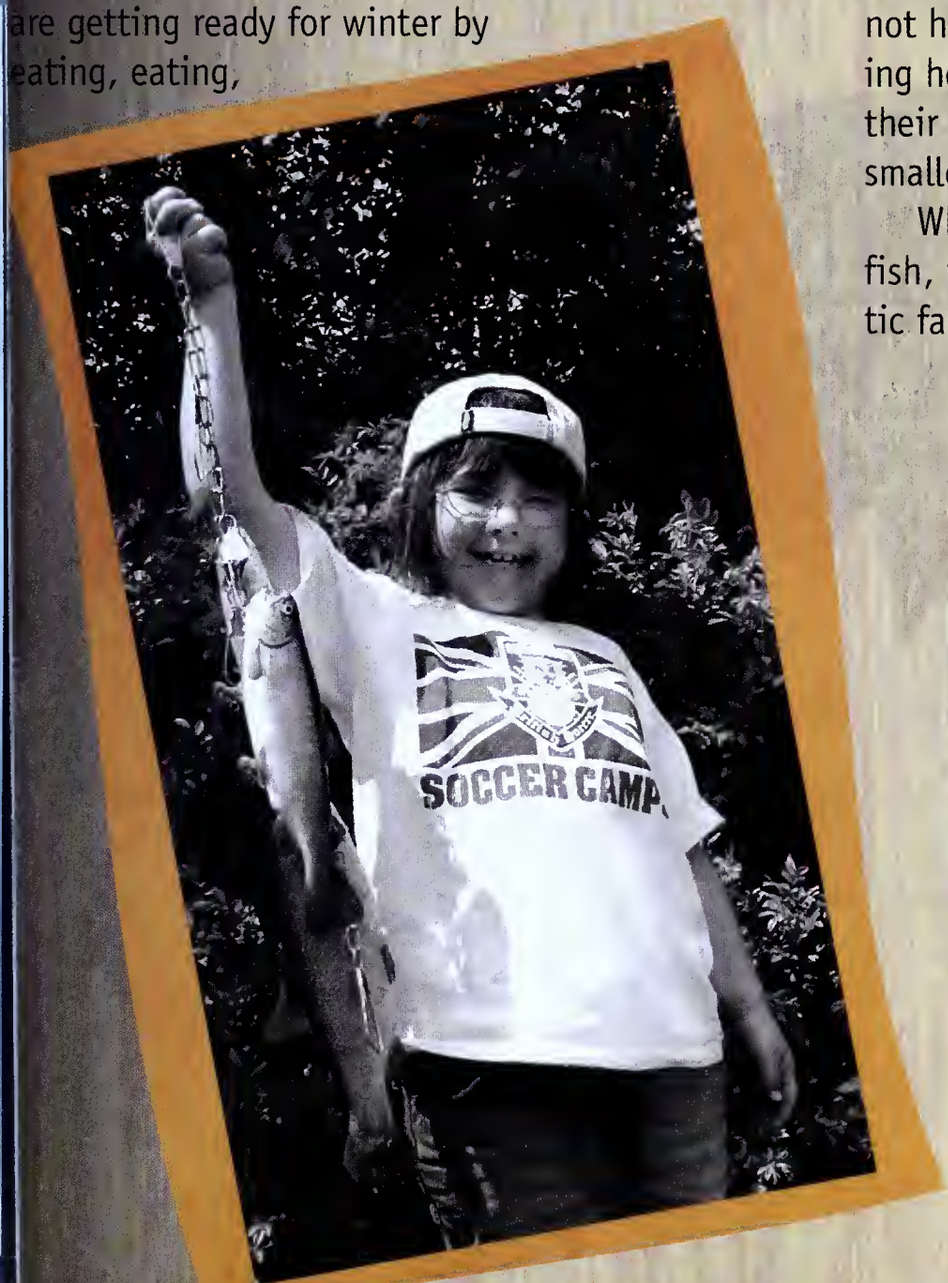
Pennsylvania • League • of • Angling • Youth

Fall 2007

FANTASTIC FALL FISHING

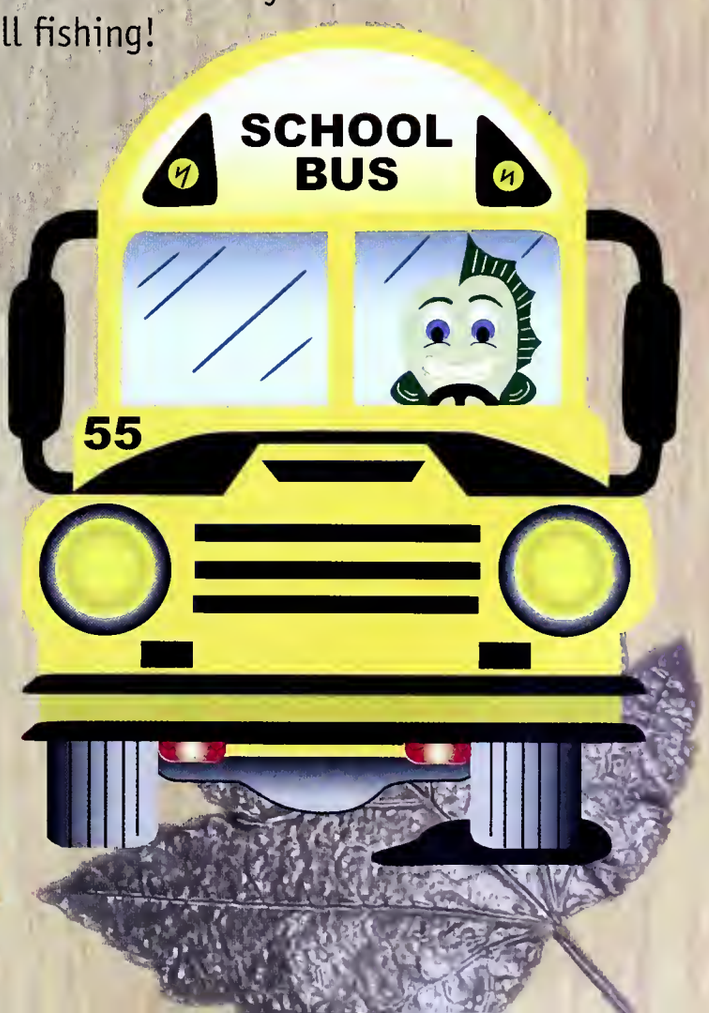
by Kim Mumper

If you like catching lots of fish, then fall is the time of year for you! Why? Think about what land animals are doing now. They are getting ready for winter by eating, eating, eating to survive through the foodless months. Although fish don't hibernate, they do slow down a lot during the winter and eat very little.



Fish are also gathering in schools now—just like you! But schools of fish are looking for food, not homework! (Ok, so neither are you!) Schooling helps them hunt better and get more food for their efforts. Watch for larger fish herding smaller baitfish in creeks and along the shore.

When you see signs of hungry, schooling fish, it's time to cast your line for some fantastic fall fishing!



PENNSYLVANIA'S FALL FISHING HOTSPOTS!



Unscramble the words below to find the fish you can catch in these fall hotspots!

1. _____ **lealyew** fishing on Lake Erie is great! They school offshore through October.

2. _____ **aeeesldth** school in Lake Erie before making their spawning runs up streams and rivers.

3. _____ Huge landlocked **respdit sabs** hang out in Raystown Lake, just waiting for you!

4. _____ Look for **uttor**, newly stocked in streams across Pennsylvania in the fall, including Bald Eagle Creek.

5. _____ You'll have a great time fishing for monster **sieukms** this fall. Try the Schuylkill River in Berks County.

6. _____ In lakes, **nisphaf** move to deeper channels in the fall; Hills Creek Lake in Tioga County is a great hotspot!

7. _____ Try for **osltahmlum abss** in the deeper, slower parts of rivers, like the Allegheny River in Armstrong County.

8. _____ Fish for **loyelw cherp** near dropoffs in the deeper parts of lakes, such as Lake Wallenpaupack in Wayne County/Pike County.

9. _____ **ternnorh kiep** are native to the Ohio River and Lake Erie watersheds. Look for them in western PA lakes and large rivers like the mouth of Conewango Creek in the city of Warren.

To check hotspots in your area, visit the Fish & Boat Commission web site's Regional Reports page: **www.fish.state.pa.us/splashes.htm.**

Answers are included at the bottom of the Mini First Aid Kit page.

BACKYARD BAIT

For live bait, you can find everything you need just outside your back door.

Look for huge grasshoppers in fields and gardens through late fall. Crickets can be found around sheds, homes, fences, garages and sidewalks, under stones, or any place that has nooks and crannies where a cricket can hide.

Look for grasshoppers early in the morning sitting on weed stems before the sun warms them. Use a butterfly net to catch them easily. Or try this with a friend: Hold an old sheet between you and run through your yard or a field and catch the bugs that fly up.

You can trap crickets by putting a slice of bread in a jar placed on its side. Keep the lid next to the jar to trap crickets when you check it.

Store crickets or grasshoppers in a lidded coffee can with holes punched in the lid. Be careful—they can and will try to jump out. Feed them a few vegetable scraps, moistened to provide water.

Hook them through the body either ahead of or behind the back legs. Fish with grasshoppers and crickets as though they had just fallen in the water. These bugs are great for catching trout, bass and panfish.

"Bug" your hook, cast away and reel in the fish!





CALLING ALL FISH JOKES!

Ok, kids, we need you to send in your favorite fish and fishing jokes and riddles!

You can include jokes about other aquatic things too. So let's hear from you!

While we're waiting for YOUR jokes, here are a few of ours!

WHICH MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS DO ANGLERS PLAY?

CAST-A-NETS!

WHERE DOES A TURTLE GO WHEN IT'S RAINING?

TO ITS SHELL-TER!

WHY IS A FISH EASY TO WEIGH?

BECAUSE IT HAS ITS OWN SCALES!

WHAT DID THE FROG GET AT A FAST-FOOD RESTAURANT?

FRENCH FLIES AND A DIET CROAK!



WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO COMMUNICATE WITH A FISH?

DROP IT A LINE!

WHAT DO YOU CALL A FISH WITH NO EYES?

FSH

Send your jokes to:
PLAY Jokes
PA Fish & Boat Commission
P.O. Box 67000
Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000
Or email your jokes to:
ra-pfbcplay@state.pa.us
Include your name (first name only), your age, and your town. We'll print as many as we can in each issue

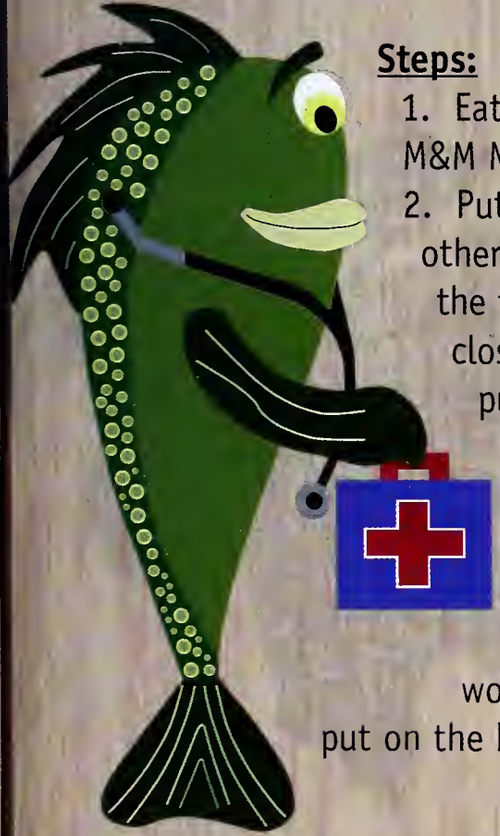
MINI FIRST AID KIT

Here's a great way to keep a few bandaids in your tackle box (or book-bag, bike bag, or even in the family car).



Here's what you need:

1 tube of M&M Minis (not the large tube)
A few bandaids
A wipe in a packet (like a "Wet Ones")
2 quarters (or more)
1 small whistle (optional)
Tweezers (optional, but a good idea)



Steps:

1. Eat the M&M Minis!
2. Put all other items in the tube, close it and put your new mini first aid kit in your tackle box.

Use the wipe to clean a wound before you put on the bandaid, and the tweezers to remove splinters or thorns. And if you need to call home at a payphone, you'll have the quarters. Add more quarters for a can of soda!

These are great little first aid kits! You might want more than one!

Answers to Pennsylvania's Fall Fishing Hotspots: 1. walleye; 2. steelhead; 3. striped bass; 4. trout; 5. muskies; 6. panfish; 7. smallmouth bass; 8. yellow perch; 9. northern pike.

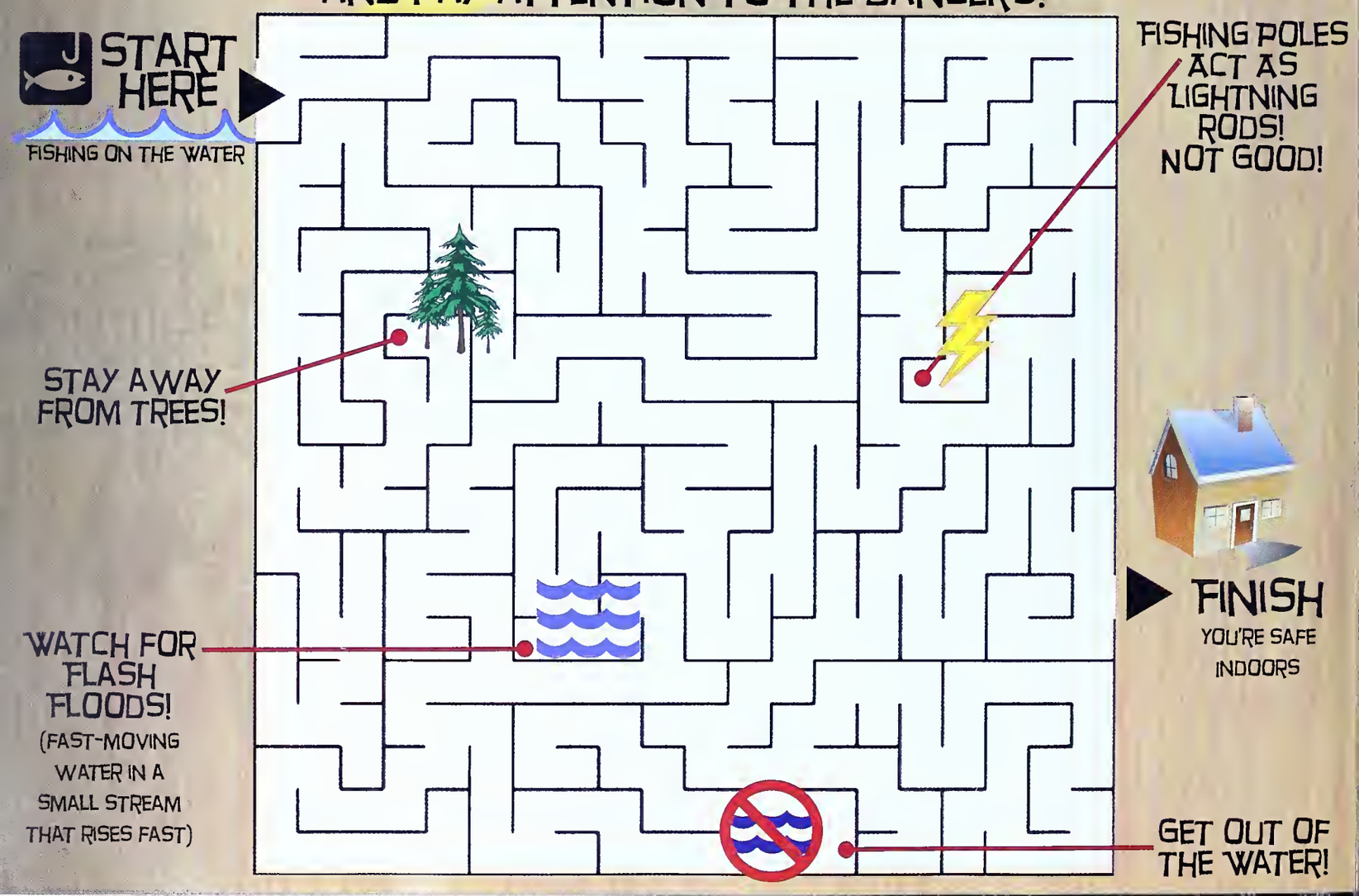
QUICK-MOVING WEATHER

A sunny fall day is awesome with colorful leaves and crisp, cool air. What a great day to fish! But autumn weather can change quickly. A fast-moving cold front can mean a sudden thunderstorm with strong winds and a big drop in temperature. You don't want to be caught near the water in that! So keep your eye to the sky and watch for:

- Darkening sky
- Dark-gray or purple clouds moving fast
- Trees showing the undersides of their leaves

If you see any of these signs of bad weather, move indoors right away. Lightning can strike miles ahead of an approaching storm. Better safe than stranded—or worse!

MAKE YOUR WAY THROUGH THIS FISHING TRIP MAZE AND PAY ATTENTION TO THE DANGERS!



LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS

Fishing is the best! But some anglers need lessons in outdoor manners. Here are some things to remember when you are enjoying the outdoors.

- **Take it out, bring it back.** Remember to bring back any garbage you have. Empty worm containers, monofilament line, and food containers belong in the trash can. If none is available, put these things in your tackle box and throw them away at home. Trash looks bad and can be dangerous for wildlife.



- **Fish where you are wanted.** Watch for signs that say "No Trespassing." That means the person who owns the land doesn't want others on his land. If you really want to fish there, take Mom or Dad with you to ask the owner if you can fish. Otherwise, obey the signs and fish somewhere else.
- **Respect other anglers.** Give others who are fishing their space. Don't crowd others, even if they are really catching fish!



PLAY
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Illustrations: Spring Gearhart
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PLAY Subscriptions:
Jean Davis and Marty Miller
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Fly-Fishing-Only Project's 50th Anniversary

Last June the Yellow Creek Coalition (YCC) marked the 50th anniversary of Bedford County's Yellow Creek Fly-Fishing-Only project with a public dedication. The YCC, a non-profit corporation comprised of representatives from the Fort Bedford, Blair County and Mountain Laurel Chapters of Trout Unlimited, coordinates water quality improvement projects and works to develop cooperative landowner relationships in the watershed.



photo-Amanda Deal

From left, Commissioner Len Lichvar, Commission Executive Director Doug Austen, Commissioner Don Anderson, Yellow Creek Coalition President Fred Sherlock, and Bedford County Waterways Conservation Officer Ted Kane attended the Bill McIlnay Fly-Fishing-Only project 50th anniversary ceremony.

A parking area, adjacent to the Fly-Fishing-Only project, created by YCC volunteers in cooperation with local landowners, was dedicated in the memory of Bill McIlnay, former waterways conservation officer, who was instrumental in implementing the project in 1957. A special "Friends of Yellow Creek" memorial was also dedicated to the memory of individuals who made significant contributions to conservation efforts in the watershed.

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Executive Director Doug Austen provided the keynote address and State Senator John Eichelberger and State Representative Dick Hess also spoke at the event. Commission President Don Anderson also attended, and District 4 Commissioner Len Lichvar, who is also a member of the Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited Chapter and YCC, served as the event's master of ceremonies.

Two New Commissioners

The summer 2007 quarterly meeting of the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission was the first for the two most recent appointees to the 10-member board. Robert A. Bachman, of Denver, and Steven M. Ketterer, of Harrisburg, were appointed by Governor Edward Rendell and confirmed by the state Senate earlier this year as the newest commissioners.

Steven M. Ketterer is serving as an at-large commissioner for boating. Ketterer has previously served the Commission for eight years as a member of the Boating Advisory Board. He's employed by the city of Harrisburg and has been active in the community for many years. A member of Harrisburg River Rescue and Emergency Services since 1972, he became chief of the organization in 1986. He helped the Commission develop its water rescue program and has helped create river rescue programs in three Commonwealth municipalities and in the state of New Jersey.



Commissioner Steven M. Ketterer

Ketterer has been twice honored for heroism, once for rescuing a person from a submerged car in a frozen river, and once by Governor Ridge for assisting victims of the 1996 flood in Harrisburg. He is a member of the Keystone Aquatic Club, the Pennsylvania Boating Association and the Pennsylvania Water Rescue Instructors Association. In addition to his activity in boating circles, his sense of community involvement is evident in the many awards he's received, including the Jaycees' Young Man of the Year Award, a citation from the Pennsylvania General Assembly for community service and the Elks' Distinguished Citizen Award.

Bachman represents the Commission's District 6, comprised of Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry and York counties.



photos-Art Michaels

Commissioner Robert A. Bachman

A 1956 graduate of the United States Naval Academy, Bachman also holds a bachelor of science degree in physical oceanography from the University of Washington and a Ph.D. in ecology from Penn State. He spent much of his career in Maryland as director of both the Fish Heritage and Wildlife Administration and Fisheries Service.

He also had a long and distinguished career in the United States Navy, serving as executive officer on two nuclear-powered submarines. Bachman also served as president of the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and on the executive committee of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. An avid bass and trout fisherman, Bachman also enjoys hunting.

For more information about current commissioners, visit the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**, select "About the PFBC," and then "Commissioners."

Zebra Mussels Found in Tioga County Lake

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Fish & Boat Commission officials, along with Pennsylvania Sea Grant, confirmed in July the discovery of zebra mussels in Cowanesque Lake, Tioga County. This discovery marks the first time zebra mussels, *Driessena polymorpha*, have been found in a Pennsylvania waterway in the Susquehanna River watershed.

Invasive species like zebra mussels pose serious threats because of their potential to foul industrial facilities and plug public water supply intakes that draw from infested waters. Invasive species can also interfere with the operation of locks and dams on rivers, and damage boat hulls and engines.

Zebra mussels threaten aquatic ecosystems because of their ability to filter about a quart of water per day. While water clarity is improved during this process, the zebra mussels disrupt the food chain by removing plankton.

"Public education is key to preventing the spread of zebra mussel infestations, as well as for protecting the many unspoiled Pennsylvania waterways we all enjoy," said DEP Deputy Secretary for Water Management Cathy Curran Myers.

The Pennsylvania Zebra Mussel Monitoring Network first discovered the mussels in Cowanesque Reservoir on May 17 as part of a routine monitoring visit. Verification analyses were conducted by DEP and Pennsylvania Sea Grant to confirm the species of mussel. Since the discovery, Pennsylvania Sea Grant has worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to alert visitors and assess the degree of the mussels' presence in the lake.

Zebra mussels are prolific breeders, and since they aren't a native species, they have no natural predators, making control and clean-up methods difficult, very expensive and generally unsuccessful. The best control is to limit the spread of zebra mussels by cleaning boats and equipment before and after use.

"The introduction of invasive species like zebra mussels can have a substantial and lasting impact on the balance of aquatic life in a waterway," said Doug Austen, Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's executive director. "Anglers and boaters should exercise great care when moving from one waterway to another so that they don't inadvertently move an aquatic nuisance species with them."

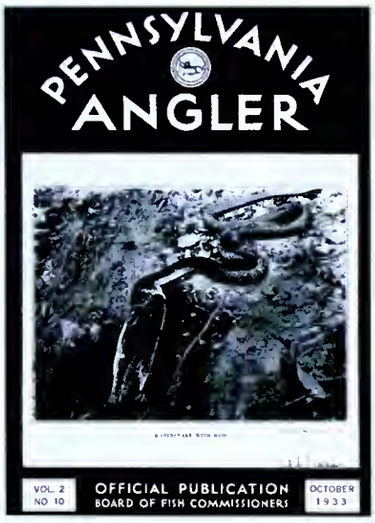
Adult zebra mussels can be found in other Pennsylvania waters, including Lake Erie, the Ohio River and portions of the lower Allegheny and Monongahela rivers. The mussels have also been reported in Edinboro and Sandy lakes in northwestern Pennsylvania, as well as upper French Creek in Crawford County.

The zebra mussel is native to the Black and Caspian seas region of eastern Europe. They were introduced to this country around 1986 when ocean-going ships released infested ballast water into the lower Great Lakes.

The Pennsylvania Zebra Mussel Monitoring Network is sponsored by DEP, Pennsylvania Sea Grant and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Coastal Zone Management Program to help slow the spread of invasive mussels in the Commonwealth's rivers, streams and lakes.

For more information on zebra mussels, visit the Pennsylvania Sea Grant invasive species web site, **www.pserie.psu.edu/seagrant/publications/ais.htm**.

ANGLER ARCHIVES



The October 1933 cover photograph shows a "watersnake with bass." This photograph was the first black-and-white photograph to appear on a *PA Angler* cover, and it's the first *PA Angler* cover photograph of an amphibian or reptile. In the 1930s, it was believed that water snakes ate fish to the point of destroying their populations. The pages of *PA Angler* then lauded those who killed water snakes, and organizations conducted snake-killing contests. Today, we know that water snakes in Pennsylvania include the northern water snake and two other snakes that are thought to be rare in Pennsylvania—Kirtland's snake (PA endangered) and the queen snake (rare). These snakes thrive in or close to a near total aquatic environment. Even though they may eat small fish, we now know that they don't destroy sport fish populations.

Commission Moves to Improve Access, Harmonize Regulations

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission took action to harmonize fishing regulations on two border waters and improve access to Lake Erie tributaries during its summer quarterly meeting in Harrisburg, in July.

Using funds generated from the sale of the special Lake Erie fishing permits, the Commission opted to move forward with two property rights acquisitions on popular Erie County steelhead trout fishing waters. The first, a 1,885-linear-foot easement, will provide access to Walnut Creek in Millcreek Township. The easement covers two contiguous parcels located between 38th Street and State Highway 832 (Sterrettania Road). One parcel will provide access to 1,000 linear feet on both sides of the creek. Another 885 feet will be along the south side of the creek. The easements will be for public fishing, boating, riparian buffer and fisheries management and will include the stream corridor and extend at least 25 feet back from the top of the bank. An additional easement for parking along State Highway 832 and an existing trail are also part of the $27,000 deal.

The second easement covers more than 1,400 linear feet of Elk Creek as it flows across property in Girard Township. The easement will be for public fishing, boating, riparian buffer and fisheries management and will include the stream corridor and extend at least 25 feet back from the top of the bank. The easement parcel is located between routes 5 and 20, along Elk Park Road. This easement was offered to the Commission for no fee by Mercyhurst College.

The Commission also took action to reconcile fishing regulation season, size and creel limits on the Delaware River and the Conowingo Pool of the Susquehanna River to make Pennsylvania regulations more consistent with other border jurisdictions.

The Delaware River is regulated jointly in various stretches by Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey. To make Pennsylvania regulations consistent with other jurisdictions, effective in 2008, a no-harvest season for largemouth and smallmouth bass will run from 12:01 a.m. the first Saturday after April 11 to 12:01 a.m. the first Saturday after June 11. A 12-inch minimum size limit, five-fish-per-day creel limit will be in place the remainder of the year. The muskellunge season will be open year-round with a daily limit of one fish at least 40 inches in length.

Beginning January 1, 2008, Pennsylvania fishing regulations will harmonize with Maryland's for the Conowingo Pool of the Susquehanna River. Changes include a year-round season on trout, with no minimum size limit and a two-per-day creel limit. The taking of alewife and blueback herring will be permissible January 1 through June 15 with no size or take limits. No clams or mussels may be taken, however. The daily limit for baitfish will become 35 for all species.

Fishin' from the Kitchen

Crispy Seared Trout Steaks

by Wayne Phillips

Searing steaks from a large trout until they are crispy makes for excellent dining.



photo-Wayne Phillips

Ingredients for four servings:

- ✔ 4 large trout steaks, scales removed
- ✔ 2 limes
- ✔ Canola or peanut oil
- ✔ Coarse sea salt
- ✔ Black pepper

Procedure

Make sure to dry the fish steaks thoroughly. The drier the surface of the fish steak, the crispier the crust. Coarse sea salt aids in forming a crunchy crust. Put a heavy cast iron skillet over high heat. When hot, add oil. Carefully dry the steaks and sprinkle both sides liberally with coarse sea salt and black pepper. Place the fish steaks in the skillets. Turn heat down to medium high. Once the first side is well browned and crusty, turn the fish steaks. The second side will cook quicker than the first. Before removing from the pan, squeeze the lime juice over the fish.

Serve

Serve lime wedges with the fish. Roasted potato wedges and a green vegetable like sugar snap peas, asparagus or broccoli are good side dishes.

Serve

You'll want to sear your trout steaks so that they have a moist center and a crisp outside. Start with a very hot pan and dry fish steaks. Add the coarse sea salt just before you put the fish in the pan. Turning the fish only once helps keep the crust crisp and crunchy. Once you turn the fish, it will take half as long to cook the second side.

In other action, the Commission:

- Approved leasing additional office space for the Three Rivers Ecological Research Center.
- Moved to transfer 0.5 acres of property at the Reynoldsdale State Fish Hatchery, Bedford County, to PennDOT for an intersection realignment project.
- Exchanged gas and oil property rights on 64 acres at the Oswayo State Fish Hatchery, Potter County.
- Created new reporting requirements for dealers of American eels.
- Banned the importation of tautog (blackfish) less than 24 inches in length.
- Removed miscellaneous special regulations on musky fishing from Sugar Lake, Crawford County.
- Extended by 0.34 miles the length of the existing Delayed-Harvest, Artificial-Lures-Only section of Sandy Lick Creek, Clearfield County.
- Approved a grant of up to $100,000 to the ClearWater Conservancy for the removal of the McCoy-Linn Dam and public access development on Spring Creek, Centre County.
- Removed Big Bass regulations from Pool 3 of the Allegheny River.
- Added a section of Middle Spring Creek, Cumberland County, to the list of waters supporting a Class A Wild Trout population.

Angler's Notebook by Jerry Bush



Photo-Jerry Bush

Most gamefish have been exposed to many angling tactics throughout a long summer. Now is the time to downsize offerings and use stealthy presentations, especially in fall's low, clear water. Light-wire hooks, thin monofilament line and gentle presentations will bring more fish to the creel.

Large pike prowl the edges of deep water now for baitfish and panfish that move from one depth to the other in autumn's fluctuating water temperatures. Cast spoons and spinnerbaits to deep water from shore and reel toward shelves bordering shallow water. Let your lures hesitate as they pass from deep water to shallow spots. If you're fishing from a boat, troll directly along shelf edges.

Autumn is a great time to visit trout streams. There's something magical about casting to trout while leaves are rich with color, the air is crisp, there's little competition, and most importantly, trout are actively feeding.

Anglers often equate grasshoppers and crickets with summer, but these insects are actually plentiful across the Keystone State well into autumn. Imitations of these insects remain effective baits until the first frost blankets an area.

Baitfish are plentiful in creek and river channels in the fall, as they migrate from shallow to deep water. Channels are especially important if your favorite reservoir is drawn down before winter. Baitfish usually swim to deep channels as the water level drops, and gamefish are sure to follow.

Judge's Ruling Further Confirms Public's Rights on Little Juniata River

A Huntingdon County jurist has confirmed his previous ruling guaranteeing the rights of citizens to have access to the Little Juniata River for fishing, boating and other recreation—a move applauded by the state agencies participating in the case.

The ruling in June by Huntingdon County Court of Common Pleas Judge Stewart Kurtz denies the defendants' motion for post-trial relief filed after the original decision was handed down in January. The Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission had filed suit in 2003 against Donald Beaver and other defendants who had closed a 1.3-mile section of the Little Juniata River to the public and started a private fishing club.

In addition to upholding his findings that the Little Juniata River is navigable, and therefore public, Kurtz permanently enjoined the defendants "from interfering with the public's rights in the Little Juniata, including the posting and/or hanging of signs, advertising the Little Juniata River as private waters and threatening, harassing and otherwise attempting to exclude the public from fishing, boating, wading and/or recreating on and in the Little Juniata River and the submerged lands owned by the Commonwealth."

The Commonwealth based ownership of the river on historical evidence of navigation and trade on the Little Juniata River dating from the 1700s and statutory designations of the river as a public highway dating to 1794, 1808 and 1822.

The Commonwealth's case drew the support of local residents and businesses, and statewide organizations.

Raystown Lake Log Book

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are asking anglers who fish Raystown Lake to participate in an angler log book program. Commission biologists will use the data collected to gain a better understanding of Raystown Lake's fishing activity.

Anglers can help the Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers maintain and enhance fishing opportunities at Raystown Lake by obtaining a log book at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Ranger Station at Raystown Lake, the Huntingdon County Visitors Bureau, or participating local bait dealers. Log books can also be downloaded from the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**, or they can be obtained by mail from: Raystown Lake Log Book Survey, John Frederick, Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, 844 Big Spring Road, Newville, PA 17241.



photo-Spring Gearhart

Scott Grahn (left) and Patrick Shine (right) were awarded the Joel E. Grottenthaler Memorial Award at the Pennsylvania Emergency Health Services Council (PEHSC) Awards Luncheon in June. Grahn and Shine are both volunteer waterway rescue instructors/trainers for the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission. The Joel E. Grottenthaler Memorial Award is presented by the PEHSC. This award recognizes a Pennsylvania volunteer emergency service provider who has demonstrated professionalism, competency, dedication, leadership, integrity, and loyalty, and who continually strives to improve the EMS system in order to provide high-quality patient care.

Fishing & Boating Events Calendar

September/October 2007

September 9, 2007

Family Fishing Program, Frances Slocum State Park, Wyoming, PA. Discover just how much fun fishing can be when you do it together at a Family Fishing Program. Learn basic fishing skills like knot-tying, rigging the rod, casting, baiting the hook, and taking a fish off the hook. You and your family will have the opportunity to fish. A fishing license is not required to participate in a Family Fishing Program and all equipment is provided. Adults must bring a child and children must bring an adult. More information: DCNR, Kathy Kelchner, 570-696-9105.

September 15, 2007

Family Fishing Program, Promised Land State Park, Greentown, PA. More information: Jen Naugle, 570-676-0567

September 15-16, 2007

Clean Water Festival, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Linesville State Fish Hatchery, Linesville, PA. The 7th Annual Clean Water Festival will be an interactive learning area geared toward educating the public on water quality, non-point source pollution, and water conservation issues. The festival gives local conservation agencies and watershed organizations an area to set up displays and provide interactive programs for participants. Participants will have the opportunity to talk with local watershed organizations, explore interactive stations, and participate in games, as well as much more. More information: Crawford County Conservation District, Brian Pilarcik, 814-763-5269 or email festival@crawfordconservation.com.

September 16, 2007

Family Fishing Program, Rose Valley Lake, Trout Run, PA. More information: Jerry Zeidler, 570-435-4506.

September 30, 2007

Family Fishing Program, Alameda Swimming Pool, Butler, PA. More information: Dave Hutner, 724-284-5383.

For a complete list of events, including boating courses near you, please visit **www.fishandboat.com** and click on "Calendar" located on the right-hand column of the main page.

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Products

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Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____



Wall Chart Sets (17" x 22" - Full Color):	Price	Quantity	Subtotal
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(B) Set of: Frogs, Salamanders, Snakes, Turtles *(4 posters)*	$3.77		
Educational Books:			
(C) Pennsylvania Amphibians & Reptiles	$9.43		
(D) Pennsylvania Fishes	$9.43		
Collectible Patches (fully embroidered):			
(E) 2005 Pickerel Frog	$4.71		
(F) 2005 American Toad	$4.71		
(G) 2006 Red-bellied Turtle	$4.71		
(H) 2006 Wood Turtle	$4.71		
(I) NEW! 2007 Green Salamander	$4.71		
(J) NEW! 2007 Northern Red Salamander	$4.71		
(K) 2005 PLAY Patch-Bluegill *(25th Anniversary)*	$2.83		
(L) 2006 PLAY Patch-Yellow Perch	$2.83		
(M) NEW! 2007 PLAY Patch-Smallmouth Bass	$2.83		
(N) "I'm a Pennsylvania Angler" Patch	$2.83		
(O) "I'm a Pennsylvania Boater" Patch	$2.83		
Other Products:			
(P) "Resource First" Short 16 oz. Mug	$4.71		
(Q) "Resource First" Tall 16 oz. Mug	$4.71		
(R) "Go Fish" Game Cards	$4.71		
(S) PFBC Safety Whistle	$5.66		

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2007 NORTHERN RED SALAMANDER	$4.71 each		
PA ANGLER & BOATER - PATCH 1	$9.43 each		
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Please indicate the requested titles with a check mark. Single copies are free. *Limit:* 6 pamphlets.
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❑ A SmartStart for Safe Paddling	*Safety Tips for Paddlers*
❑ Angler Award Program	*State records, big fish, first fish, rules and application*
❑ Basics of Water Pollution	*Types of water pollution, effects on resources*
❑ Careers with the PFBC	*Opportunity descriptions, civil service, non-civil service*
❑ Drinking, Boating and the Law	*Commonly asked questions with answers*
❑ Fish Scale Sketch	*Commission overview, mission and programs*
❑ Fishing and Boating Map	*Accesses and amenities, with PennDOT highway map*
❑ Great Fishing Needs Great Habitat	*Brochure about habitat components*
❑ Hazards on the Water	*Recognizing, avoiding dangers to boaters*
❑ I Just Bought a Boat, Now What Do I Do?	*Boat registration's frequently asked questions*
❑ Paddle Pennsylvania	*Water trail listings, map and launch permit application*
❑ PA Fishes Identification Guide	*Quick reference with illustrations, depicts over 90 fish species*
❑ Snakes in Pennsylvania	*Biology, identification, venomous, non-venomous*

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Smallmouth Bass Tagged Fish Study

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission and Penn State University researchers are hoping a pilot study using specially tagged fish will help them reel in data about smallmouth bass fishing pressure and harvest on the Susquehanna and Juniata rivers.

"The objective of the pilot tagging study is to estimate catch-and-release rates of smallmouth bass on the Susquehanna River as well as harvest rates," said Leroy Young, chief of the Commission Division of Fisheries Management. "This will give us better information than is currently available on the effects of alternative regulations on the smallmouth bass fishery. The results of this initial tagged fish study will also help us determine if a larger effort along these lines would be worthwhile in 2008."

The data, coupled with data obtained from a related angler use-and-harvest study, will greatly enhance the agency's understanding of the fishery and thus aid it in making future fisheries management decisions.

Bass are marked with tags that look like a piece of plastic spaghetti trailing behind the pectoral fin. These tags were designed so that bass that are caught several times can be reported.

The first time a tagged bass is captured and an angler intends to release the fish, the angler should clip off the tag's outermost portion and leave the tag's inner portion containing duplicate information. Anglers should retain the tag and call the toll-free phone number listed on the tag. Anglers should not pull the tag out of the fish because doing so may injure the fish.

If the bass is captured a second time, the remainder of the tag can be removed and the fish can be released. Anglers harvesting bass should be on the lookout for both the spaghetti tag and a small anchor button under the skin when filleting fish—they may have taken a bass that was caught and released twice before and no longer bears an external tag. Those finding anchor buttons in harvested bass should also call the toll-free phone number printed on the button.

All tags must be reported no later than December 31, 2007.

The tagged smallmouth bass study is part of a larger research project designed to measure catch, harvest, economic expenditures and angler opinions associated with fishing on sections of the two rivers for the period April through October. The Susquehanna River survey reach extends from Sunbury to the Holtwood Dam near the Maryland border. The survey reach on the Juniata River extends from Port Royal to the mouth near Duncannon.

Creel clerks have already begun to interview anglers at access areas using a statistically structured sampling design. In visiting access areas, clerks will ask anglers about their fish catches and the amount of time they spent fishing. Creel clerks will also ask how much anglers spend on travel (gasoline and hotel costs), fishing tackle and other gear such as bait. Finally, anglers will be asked about their satisfaction associated with fishing and their feelings about public and private access on these rivers.

"This is a large-scale effort to get important information on what is widely considered to be one of the best riverine fisheries in the nation," said Commission Executive Director Doug Austen. "The results of the survey will provide valuable information that can then be used in setting the management directions for species such as smallmouth bass, catfish, walleye, carp, rock bass and American shad."

Boaters' Checklist for Safe, Secure Waterways

- **Keep your distance from all military, cruise-line and commercial shipping.** Do not approach within 100 yards, and slow to minimum speed within 500 yards of any U.S. Naval vessel, including any U.S. military or military supply vessel. Approaching certain other commercial vessels may result in an immediate boarding.
- **Observe and avoid all security zones.** Avoid commercial port operations areas, especially those that involve military, cruise-line or petroleum facilities. Observe and avoid other restricted areas. Violators will be perceived as a threat, and will face a quick, determined and severe response.
- **Do not stop or anchor beneath bridges or in the channel.** If you do, expect to be boarded by law enforcement officials.
- **Keep a sharp eye out for anything that looks peculiar or out of the ordinary.** Report all activities that seem suspicious to the local authorities, the Coast Guard, or the port or marina security. Do not approach or challenge those acting in a suspicious manner.
- **Always secure and lock your boat.** Observe this precaution when you store and move your boat, and while you are visiting marina restaurants or a friend's dock and other piers.
- **Never leave your boat accessible to others.** Always take the keys to the boat with you.
- **When storing your boat, make sure it is secure and its engine is disabled.** If it is on a trailer, make the trailer as immovable as possible.
- **Remain sober and alert when on the water.** Stay in control of your craft and respect the rights of others lawfully enjoying the waterways.

This information is provided by the U.S. Coast Guard and the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators.

Cast & Caught

"takemefishing"



U.S. Army Specialist Kayla Parr, Mechanicsburg, shows her catch from a Baghdad waterway.



Roger Ayers, age 9, caught this large-mouth bass in a northeast Pennsylvania pond. The bass was 16 to 18 inches long and weighed 4 or 5 pounds. Roger hooked the bass on a green frog lure.



Meghan and Emily Shiels show off their catch of crappies from last April at F.J. Sayers Lake (Bald Eagle State Park), Centre County.



First-season angler Stephanie Hinderliter caught this 26-inch golden rainbow trout on a wax-worm at the confluence of Beaver Run and Redbank Creek, Jefferson County. The fish weighed 6 pounds, 2 ounces.



Charles M. Sacavage, Hegins, PA, caught this 25-inch golden rainbow trout last May in Big Pine Creek, Tioga County. The fish hit a spinner. It weighed between 6 and 7 pounds.



Howard Wagner hefts a musky he caught last spring on a perch-patterned hand-crafted lure in a tributary to the Ohio River. The fish weighed about 30 pounds and measured about 46 to 48 inches.



Alyssa Sinclair, age 10, shows off her first fish caught on a fly rod. Alyssa and her dad spent many hours practicing fly-fishing techniques. It all paid off last spring when she hooked this trout all by herself on Spring Creek, Centre County.

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Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER

November/December 2007
$3.00

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Last Chance!
2007 PFBC Photography Contest
Entry Deadline: December 31, 2007

PA Fish & Boat Commission web site:
www.fish.state.pa.us

The Keystone State's Official Fishing & Boating Magazine



PROTECT
CONSERVE
ENHANCE

A Fuller Understanding of Global Warming



by Douglas J. Austen, Ph.D.
Executive Director
PA Fish & Boat Commission

RESOURCE FIRST
PROTECT • CONSERVE • ENHANCE

It's impossible to open the newspaper or scan the Internet without running across some article about global warming: Sea levels rising, remarkable reductions in the extent of glaciers, new invasive species moving into areas that previously were too cold, and the loss of ice on lakes that dramatically reduces our ice fishing season. All of these changes seem to be happening simultaneously, which create a signal that is very hard to ignore. Global warming is a reality that we must address in our efforts to protect, conserve and enhance our natural resources. Certainly there is a cadre of people who are predicting gloom and doom. Conversely, there are some who adamantly deny the existence of any significant global climatic shift—or who at least would argue our role in it. As with any issue of this magnitude, we cannot let the fringes misdirect us or give us an excuse not to attempt to gain a fuller understanding.

Recently, the need to consider the subject of global warming came home, and I'd like to share what I have learned from the experience of working with fisheries and wildlife professionals throughout the country.

The situation was a panel of agency directors, one each from the Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, the West, and Alaska's director. The setting was the annual meeting of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. This organization is the umbrella group for state natural resource agencies that represents our interests in Washington, D.C., and that works on state partnership issues. In my role of speaking for the Northeast, my staff and I prepared by contacting all of the Northeast states and the Canadian provinces from Ontario to Nova Scotia. We asked for their position on global warming, policies that direct their agencies, and how their management is affected, if at all, by global warming. Throughout this process we also canvassed the literature and looked for reports that project what will happen and provide guidelines for response.

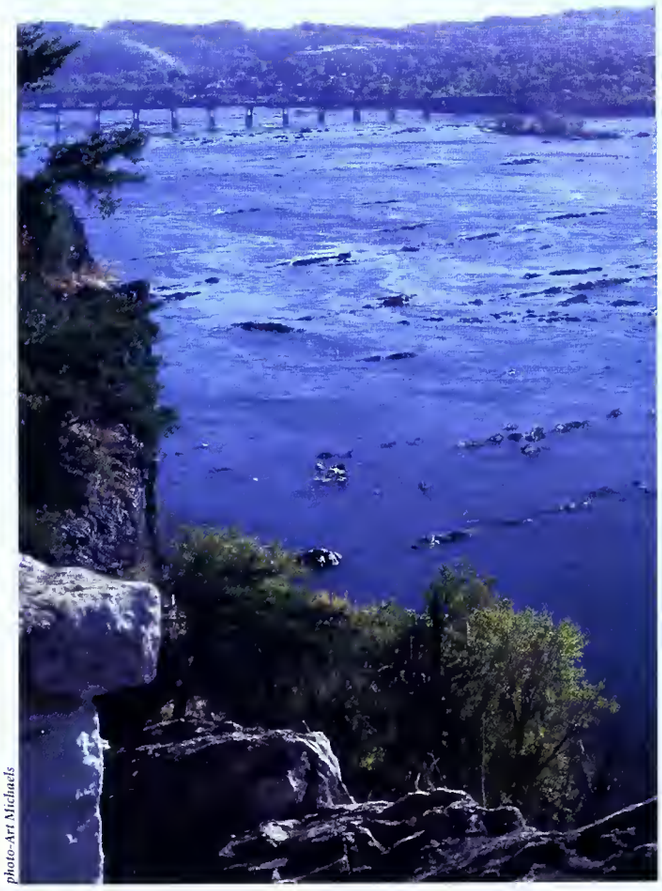


photo-Art Michaels

Many of the effects global warming will produce in the coming century resemble the same general type of impact on streams as urbanization has had over the past century.

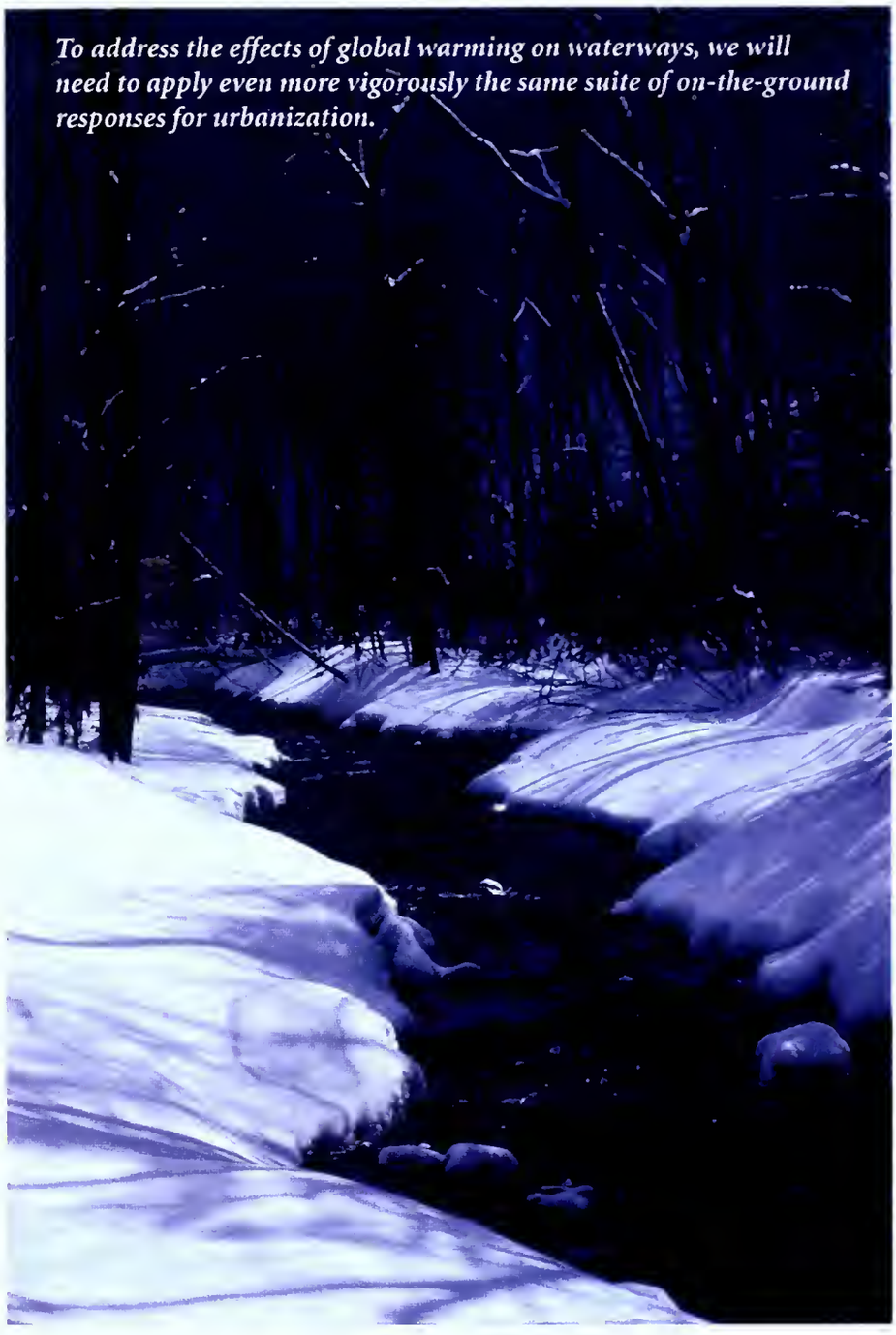
What emerged were a couple of very clear points that weren't particularly obvious to me going into the process.

Right up front it was clear that every state natural resource agency recognizes that global warming is real and that we need to take it seriously as a management challenge. This wasn't a message from non-biologist bureaucrats swayed by movies such as Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth.* This message was sent by field biologists who are observing firsthand alarming changes in Alaska and dramatic ecological shifts in Arizona.

It is at these fringes, either the arctic areas or the desert locations, where the effects will be the most dramatic and first noticed. There were also other signals that were brought up repeatedly. For example, diseases and invasive species have moved north as winter's low temperatures have become less severe. All of this has made the vague concept of a worldwide climate shift a local reality for the agencies responsible for managing the resource. We need to understand what is happening and be prepared for what it will bring to each of our states.

That said, there certainly is a great deal of room for better understanding. There is substantial fog surrounding the various model predictions for how fast warming has or will occur. The predicted effects in some areas will be greater than others, and the detail of the models makes it hard to say how changes will affect specific areas.

So given such vagaries, what shall we as natural resource agencies do? Do we change our current management in anticipation of impending changes? Should regulations be adopted that reflect potential future scenarios? We struggled with these questions. Without knowing specific effects for a particular area, it is hard to create management plans. Thus, the mid-latitude states such as Pennsylvania are finding that developing appropriate responses to these challenges is difficult.



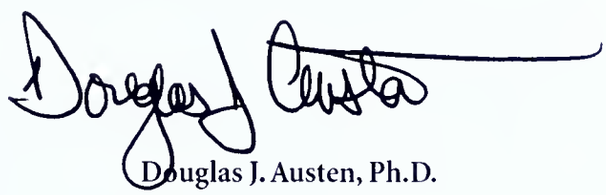
To address the effects of global warming on waterways, we will need to apply even more vigorously the same suite of on-the-ground responses for urbanization.

Photo-Russ Gerling

It strikes me, however, that resource agencies already have some tools in their arsenals. For example, many of the effects global warming will produce in the coming century resemble the same general type of impact on streams as urbanization has had over the past century. We have already experienced warming of the water caused by loss of riparian vegetation. We have witnessed stream flows becoming unnatural as a result of impervious surfaces (that is, parking lots) producing higher flood flows and more extensive low flows. Nearby groundwater recharge areas have been replaced by houses and strip malls. The result has been the loss of species, degraded water quality, and, almost certainly, loss of recreational opportunities.

To address the effects of global warming on waterways, we will need to apply even more vigorously the same suite of on-the-ground responses for urbanization: Protect riparian areas, reduce impervious surfaces, prevent sprawl as much as possible, and maintain or improve instream habitat. These are good things regardless of the nature of the insult on the land.

Yes, there are many impacts on our natural resources, all of which must be addressed. Certainly, there is some uncertainty about which line on a chart will most accurately predict what will happen. But there was no doubt, at least not among the natural resource professionals at this immense conference, that global warming will affect our species, the land and the water. We need to ensure that we are prepared, that the people, such as each of you who values our natural resources, are informed, and that we support appropriate and effective efforts to reduce global warming.



Douglas J. Austen, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Casting Around

More than holiday gifts

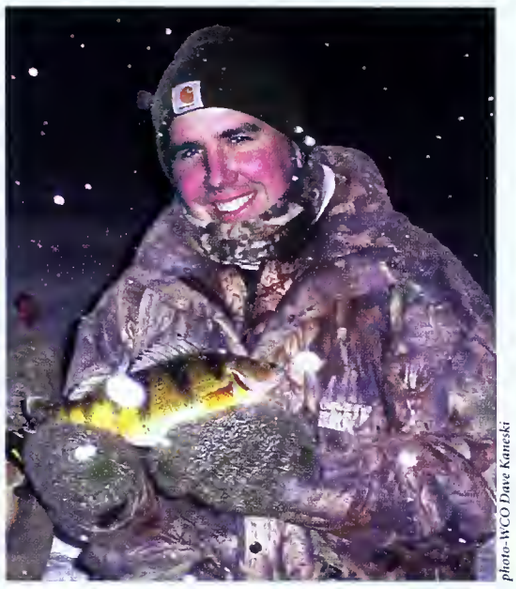


photo-WCO Dave Kaneski

This issue's theme, "Fishing & Boating Traditions," suggests the cyclical nature of our sport, that in each season we do many of the same things. That's a good thing, as you'll see in the variety of related material in this issue.

For one thing, now is the time we prepare for ice fishing, while we hope for early ice. While we're keeping our fingers crossed, read the ice fishing forecast for northeast Pennsylvania in this issue's "Cast Away" column on **page 13**. Also, on **page 20** check regular contributor Vic Attardo's article on ice fishing opportunities in southeast Pennsylvania.

In this issue, as in all of our November/December issues, we include the year's annual article index, on **page 29**. Scan the index and visit the magazine on the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**, to find some great fireside reading. On the main page's left side, hold your cursor over "Pubs. & Products" and then click on "PA Angler & Boater."

Another of our magazine traditions includes printing the next year's seasons, sizes and creel limits for Commonwealth inland waters. That information appears in this issue on **pages 32-33**. The two pages of this information appear in the exact center of the magazine, so you could pull them from the magazine for poster-like display.

In this issue we also remind readers to heed the 2007 PFBC Photography Contest deadline, December 31, 2007. The contest rules and entry form appear on **page 7**. Consider the rules, pick your best shots from 2007, and enter the contest! Carefully consider the categories.

The fishing in Pennsylvania is considered so good that an international fly-fishing competition took place. For details see **page 53**.

Our traditions in November and December, including those of fishing and boating, mean a lot more to us than just giving gifts. Consider taking a boating safety course this winter with boating family members and friends. See **page 18** for details.

During this time of year we recharge our family ties and connections. It's also time to consider our batteries in a literal sense—boat batteries, that is. See **page 24** for useful information on this topic.

Forecasting aside, there's good fishing to be done now. See **page 14** for regular contributor John Allen's ideas on how to go deep now for panfish, and on **page 44** regular contributor Mike Bleech spells out strategies for catching steelhead. Special tactics also apply now for tempting river walleyes, and on **page 10** regular contributor Darl Black shows us how to get in on this action.—*Art Michaels, Editor.*

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The mission of the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission is to protect, conserve and enhance the Commonwealth's aquatic resources and provide fishing and boating opportunities.

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Pennsylvania Angler & Boater

November/December 2007
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Fishing and Boating Traditions

The Keystone State's Official Fishing and Boating Magazine

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On the cover



This issue's front cover emphasizes the importance of passing along fishing and boating traditions to the next generation of anglers and boaters and that our fishing and boating traditions mean a lot more than just holiday gift-giving. Photo by Spring Gearhart.



MAIL

Under the buttonwood

Today is Saturday, March 31, 2007, at about 7:15 in the morning. The air is cool and all I hear as I walk are the wild geese, the wind in the trees, the gravel under my boots and the overflow from my dad's lake nearby. Everyone and everything is silent waiting for 8 a.m. I smell the grasses and the rich, woodsy earth and a slight scent of bacon from the church kitchen across the way. There are the low murmurs of the anglers and pipe smoke as I walk down the lane. I smile and hug my son. Uncles, cousins, friends from school, church members and new friends get a wave. I see that the spot under the buttonwood is waiting for me. My dad is usually across from me to keep an eye on me and drink the organic black coffee and donuts as I snitch his earthworms occasionally, but this year my dad is helping my mom heal from a fall she took in Florida, so he is missed, but only for this year. I know there will be a next year and I will look across and see my hero then.

For 73-some years, my dad, his brothers and before that his dad and granddads and friends have fished this creek. For 48 years I've come with my son, Anthony; husband, Dave; and friends. When we were little, my sister and I would deliver coffee, hotdogs, sauerkraut and donuts from the little Granite First Baptist Church of Saint Peters across the road to anglers for donations. This year the church had a great breakfast, which I enjoyed before I came to my perch under this tree. This was the tree my grandfather always fished under, I was told. Years ago, my dad bought this land all along Saint Peters Road from my grandfather. He raised Angus cattle and sheep, and dug a lake that is home to a beaver that lets us all know he is present this day. Dad always lets my cousins stay overnight before the big day and they have a great fire and pitch a tent. The anglers have always been welcome on the land.

I'm sure all over Pennsylvania there are true stories like mine. I love my family heritage and this land is very much in my soul and always will be. And now it's 8 a.m. and I miss my dad this year, but I know he wishes he could be here, and he will be this time next year.—*Connie Lawrence-Gantert, Fleetwood, PA.*



Scott Stengele's double bass catch from last July in the Poconos.

Catch of a lifetime

On Monday morning, July 30, I was fishing with my nephew in the Poconos when I made the catch of a lifetime. We were trolling crankbaits when I hooked what seemed to be a good fish. It jumped when hooked, but we could not tell whether it was a pickerel or a bass. After a good fight, my nephew was able to net my catch and promptly said, "I can't believe it." On my lure was not one good bass, but two. I caught a 17-inch largemouth on the rear treble hook and a 15-inch bass on the front treble hook. We immediately rowed to shore to show the rest of the family and take pictures. I guess I would steal a modern advertising slogan and claim: $25 for my nephew's 3-day nonresident license, $51 for my nonresident license, and the chance for the catch of a lifetime, priceless.—*Scott Stengele, Toms River, NJ.*

Raystown reward

While fishing Raystown Lake in Huntingdon County last August, my 11-year-old son Michael caught a 38-inch, 25-pound striped bass while trolling a live alewife just after first light. This fish was one of five stripers caught by our family during our week-long vacation. Three of our fish were 34 inches or better. Raystown Lake is truly a unique fishery and my son is hooked for life.—*Mike Allen.*



Michael Allen and his father, Mike, with their 38-inch Raystown Lake striper.

2008 Fishing Licenses

Fishing licenses for 2008 go on sale December 1, 2007, and are valid through December 2008. They may be purchased at license-issuing agents, county treasurers' offices, Fish & Boat Commission regional offices, and on the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us.

Last Chance! Deadline: December 31, 2007

2007 PFBC Photography Contest

Entry Deadline: December 31, 2007

The 2007 Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Photography Contest is intended to foster a greater appreciation for Pennsylvania's fishing and boating, and aquatic resources.

Contest winners will receive a certificate, the limited-edition magazine 75th anniversary patches, and the limited-edition 2007 nongame species patch. Honorable mention winners will receive a certificate and the limited-edition year 2007 nongame species patch.

The contest now includes a "best in show" selection from all category first-place winners. The best in show winner receives a framed 1991 trout stamp poster. The Commission began issuing trout/salmon stamps in 1991.

Winning entries and honorable mentions may appear in a contest feature article in a future issue of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater*. All entries may also be used elsewhere in the magazine, on the magazine's cover, in Commission publications, on the Commission's web site, and in Commission exhibits and other projects.

The contest will run from March 2007 through December 2007.

View the results of the 2006 contest by clicking the contest link on the Commission web site's main page, at **www.fish.state.pa.us**.

RULES

- The contest is open to amateur photographers (anyone who makes less than half one's annual income from taking and/or selling photographs).
- Commission employees and volunteers and their immediate family members are not eligible.
- Entries must be original works taken in Pennsylvania, on waterways with public access, and they must have been taken by the person entering the contest.
- Entries must also show adherence to Pennsylvania fishing and boating laws and regulations.
- In photographs, all boaters and anglers in boats must be wearing properly fitted, buttoned and zipped life jackets. It's encouraged that children on shore near the water should wear life jackets.
- Entrants are responsible for securing photo releases from identifiable subjects.
- Entrants may submit only mounted 35mm color slides, color prints in sizes 3 ½"x5", 4"x6", 5"x7", or 8"x10", or unmounted medium-format and large-format transparencies.
- All submissions must be in color–no black-and-white photos.
- No mounted, over-matted, framed or glassed prints will be accepted.
- Retouched or electronically manipulated entries are not allowed.
- Please do not send negatives or digital files.
- Each photo must include the entrant's name, address, phone number, location of the photograph including county, species identification (if applicable), and category, in addition to a fully completed official entry form on this page for each category entered.
- Multiple submissions are allowed, but participants are limited to a total of two entries per category.
- The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission shall have the right to digitize and use all submissions for publishing, illustration, World Wide Web display, advertising, trade, exhibits and promotion, and in any other use in any medium for any purpose whatsoever without compensation.
- Winning entries (1st, 2nd or 3rd place) from previous Commission photography contests are not eligible.
- Entrants who want their materials returned must include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with the right amount of postage and appropriate packaging to safeguard materials. ***Submissions that do not include return envelopes and postage will not be returned.***

Photo Contest Entry Form

www.fish.state.pa.us

Complete this form with each entry and mail to: PFBC Photo Contest, PA Fish & Boat Commission, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000. The deadline for the Commission's receiving entries is December 31, 2007.

Please Print Clearly

Entrant's Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail (if available): _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Categories

❑ 1. Seasonal Fishing and/or Boating
(main focus on activity with seasonal backgrounds (snow, ice, fall leaves, etc.)

❑ 2. Family Fishing and/or Boating
(emphasis on two or more family members)

❑ 3. Young Anglers and/or Boaters
(photos of anglers and/or boaters less than 12 years of age)

❑ 4. Waterway Scenics (Impoundments)
(lakes, ponds and reservoirs)

❑ 5. Waterway Scenics (Flowing Waters)
(rivers, streams and creeks)

❑ 6. Reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates
(animal closeups or photos with the animals as the primary subject)

I received this form from (check one):

❑ *PA&B* magazine
❑ the Commission's web site
❑ Photo dealer
❑ Other (specify) _____

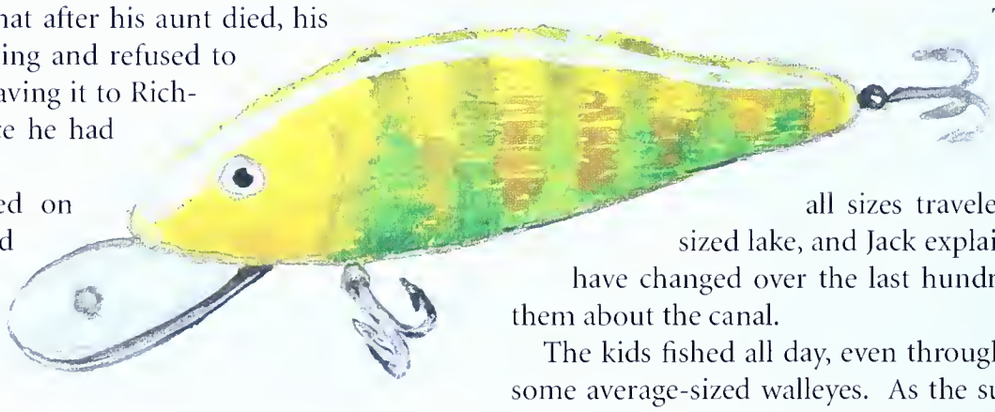
REFLECTING ON THE WATER
Lake Erie Adventure

by Ron Kuhn

illustrations by the author

Jack stopped his truck at a warehouse on Factory Street. "301 Factory Street," he said to himself, scanning a hand-drawn map. An older gentleman stepped out of a car in front of Jack's truck. "Are you Mr. Gobin?" Jack asked. "You must be Jack," the older white-haired man replied. After shaking hands the two men walked through a rusty dark-green door into the red brick warehouse. After walking around a maze of boxes, crates and sheets covering larger items, they came to a larger item covered with an old sail cloth. As the old man pulled the canvas away, a small cloud of dust filled the room. Under the dim light of the old building, Jack ran his hand along the wooded hull as he looked inside the mahogany-clad boat.

"How long has she been here?" "Thirty years," the gentleman said with a tone of disbelief. "My uncle bought this when he came home from Korea. He parked her here when Aunt Helen died." Jack talked to Richard for some time and learned that after his aunt died, his uncle gave up boating and refused to sell the old boat, leaving it to Richard in his will since he had no children.



After they agreed on a price, Jack backed his truck up to the old trailer to tow the rig home to his shop to begin working on it. After some work on the trailer lights, he thanked Mr. Gobin and began the trip home from Williamsport. Although Jack wanted to start working on the boat immediately, it would have to wait. Jack had been planning a fishing trip to Lake Erie for months, and they were planning to stay at one of the hotels just out of town the next night. Jack had chartered a boat for two days of walleye and perch fishing off the coast of Pennsylvania.

After several hours of driving, Jack arrived in Erie. It was midday, raining and a dense bluish-gray fog loomed over the large body of water. Several people were fishing off the dock as Jack, Beth and the kids walked along the concrete that extended into the lake. As Jack walked along he thought of the cabin cruiser he had just bought, and he wondered if it had ever traveled along these shorelines.

After talking to several fishermen, it sounded like the weather and the fishing would be pretty good the next day. Jack and his uncle used to come up to Erie once a year, alternating fishing the creeks one year with fishing from a boat the next. The kids would have a better time fishing from the large boat since they are too young to wade in the ice-cold creek.

Jack opened the door to their hotel room and soon the kids were bouncing on the beds as he turned the older television to a channel with the local weather report. Beth was reading a pamphlet about the many shipwrecks that still lay in the frigid, dark waters.

After a night's sleep, Jack and the family headed down to the water to board the charterboat they would be fishing on for the weekend. After everyone was on board, the captain navigated the vessel north into the lake. Jack pointed out the different creeks that fed into the lake as they motored out. With the smell of diesel in the air the captain shut off the motors and the first mate began setting out all of the rods. Ethan and Ellie started catching yellow perch. The kids weren't used to catching perch this large. Throughout the day boats of all sizes traveled about the oversized lake, and Jack explained how the boats have changed over the last hundred years. He told them about the canal.

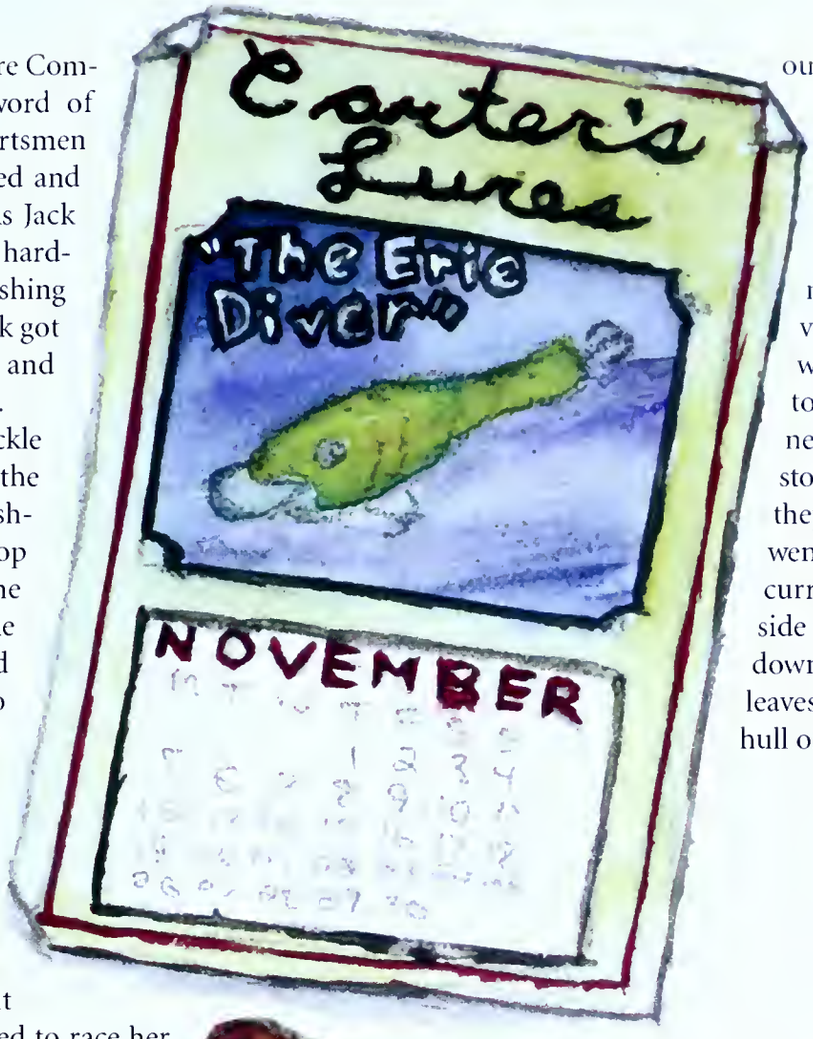
The kids fished all day, even through lunch, pulling in some average-sized walleyes. As the sun set in a pool of red and orange clouds that appeared to be on fire, the boat headed inland to Erie. Jack had talked to the captain about using Carter brand lures on the boat with some promotional posters several months ago. The lures were working so well that other charters and private boats were becoming interested.

After returning to the slip, Jack took the family to a buffet that he had been going to for years. "Do you think we might catch a steelhead tomorrow?" Ethan questioned. "It's possible," Jack replied, as he ate his mashed potatoes. Jack planned to take everyone out the next afternoon for a four-hour fishing trip. He would need several hours to meet with some of the contacts he had made through his web site. After dinner, everyone headed back to the hotel, watched some television and went to sleep without any jumping on the beds.

After breakfast, Jack headed out with posters, displays and his lure inventory to distribute to the rest of his con-

tacts. Most of his Carter's Lure Company retailers came from word of mouth—Pennsylvania sportsmen liked to use products designed and made in their home state. As Jack went from tackle shops to hardware stores, he talked about fishing and boating on Lake Erie. Jack got a lot of ideas for new lures and some different color schemes.

At one of the small tackle shops, Jack was leaning on the counter talking to an older fisherman who owned the shop since the late 1960s. As the two men talked about the weather and the good and bad years, Jack noticed a photo of a wooden boat much like the one he had purchased days before. "Is that your boat in the photo?" The white-haired man turned and peered up at the old wooden frame holding the photo. "Sure is. I bought her used off of a guy who used to race her back in the 1930s." Jack explained that he had just bought a similar boat and that he would have to restore it. "Do you want to see her?" asked the old man. "Sure, where is she?"



The old fisherman motioned Jack to follow him to a garage behind the tackle shop. After the incandescent lights warmed, Jack could see the antique boat in all of its glory. Jack ran his hands along the wood and antique brass cleats. After about an hour of talking about navigating and the weather on Lake Erie, Jack realized the charter boat would be leaving in an hour. Jack promised to bring his boat up to show the old-timer once he had it completely restored.

After an hour of fishing, Beth's rod bent and line began spooling off the reel. Ethan kept saying, "It's a steelhead." After several minutes the first mate thrust the net into the cold, gray water and pulled in the only steelhead of that day. Jack planned to stay an extra day to check out the action on Walnut Creek and several other tributaries, so they returned to the hotel for one more evening.

With winter beginning to clutch Pennsylvania in its grasp, Jack would have more time to work on the boat and new lures inside his wood stove-heated shop. Once they returned home, Jack went over his orders and current inventory while outside the shop, cold rain came down on the fresh bed of oak leaves. Jack began sanding the hull of his new old boat.

FALL AND WINTER RIVER WALL

It's a time I anticipate each year. The foliage, so brilliantly colored a few weeks earlier but now dead and drab, has been flushed from the river. The valley and surrounding hollows regularly report the sounds of deer hunters zeroing their rifles in anticipation of the annual post-Thanksgiving ritual. And in major rivers like those that drain the hills of western Pennsylvania, concentrations of walleyes will be found in well-defined areas.

On navigable rivers like the Ohio, Monongahela and lower Allegheny, walleyes begin an upstream migration that will be impeded by locks and dams. Because of these barriers good numbers of walleyes can be found in the first couple of miles downriver of dams.

Locations

The immediate tailrace areas of dams are off limits to boat anglers, but depending on access considerations, these places can be hotspots for shore fishermen. In some cases, such as on several Allegheny River dams, fishing platforms have been built in conjunction with hydroelectric generating facilities. Shoreline tailrace fishing tends to be better when river flows are normal to low. High water creates strong currents that not only hamper fishing efforts, but also likely drive fish from the area.

Indeed, current is the single most important consideration when determining the location of river walleyes when water temperatures drop below 40 to 45 degrees. Walleyes will seek areas of refuge from heavy current.

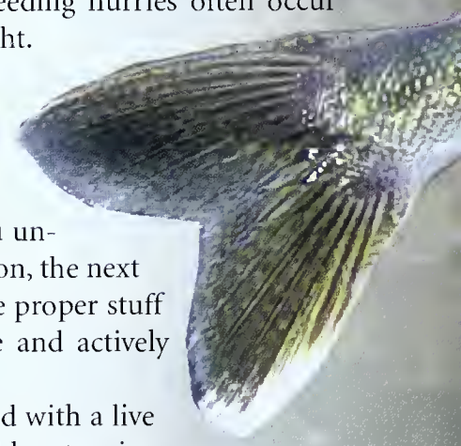
Many situations occur that provide cold-water walleyes with the conditions they require. Gravel bars washed into the river at the mouths of feeder streams deflect the main current force. Good walleye habitat can often be found below such a gravel bar, and in some instances above it. In the case of larger tributaries, you can often find the proper current situation at the mouth of the creek, and it can extend a short way up the creek. Islands, bridge piers, shoreline points and pilings are other obstructions that block the river's flow, often creating the pockets of slackwater holes where walleyes will spend the winter.

Basically the same conditions hold true on the middle portion of the Allegheny (from the Kinzua outflow to East Brady) and the lower portion of the Youghiogheny. These river sections don't have dams to stop upstream walleye movement. The fish, however, will slide into eddies and slackwater holes created by gravel bars, major river bends and shoreline irregularities.

Walleyes that aren't actively feeding tend to hold in the "meat" of the hole, away from current edges. In many cases this is also the deepest part of the hole. These fish can be caught, but they aren't aggressive.

Biting fish tend to shift to the edges of a wintering hole, because they usually find food in these areas. These spots can be the tailout of a pool. If the current isn't strong, biting walleyes will often move down on the flat itself, or they might stir closer to the shallows located near the bank. If one exists, they might relocate up onto a gravel bar at the head of the hole. Or they might move to the current seam where the slackwater of the protected pool meets the faster water in the main channel. How walleyes use a specific spot depends on the physical characteristics—the availability and nature of the feeding lies—each individual place provides. Actually fishing a spot can be necessary to understand how it functions.

During the late fall and winter, river walleyes are more likely to bite better and longer on cloudy or rainy days, especially in clear water conditions. When the water is clear and the day is bright, feeding flurries often occur during the evening twilight.



Tactics

Angling tactics take all of these places into consideration. Once you understand basic fish location, the next step is outfitting with the proper stuff to fish for both inactive and actively feeding fish.

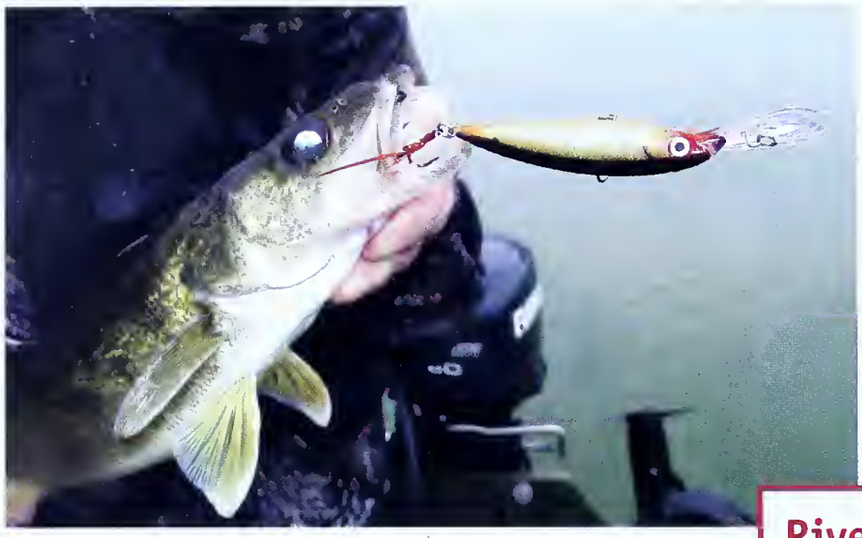
The leadhead jig tipped with a live minnow is the classic cold-water river walleye presentation, one that still has lots of applications. Bucktail jigs and soft-bodied baits such as grubs, ringworms and tubes are also effective. Add blade baits and jigging spoons to the list. Suspending minnowbaits are seldom used, but have a well-deserved niche, as does a live-bait rig for deadsticking a lively minnow.

Much of the time wintertime river walleyes are inactive. Even when they are actively feeding it's less likely they'll chase a lure as they would in warm-water conditions. So

EYES

by Jeff Knapp
photos by the author





Fish using shallow flats below the deep water often will hit a suspending minnowbait.

wintertime offerings tend to be slow, as in spoon-feeding them.

Tactics geared toward inactive fish target the wintering hole itself, referenced earlier as the "meat" of the hole. Walleyes schooled in wintering holes may be inactive, but they may eat if the bait hovers right in front of them.

Boat anglers have an advantage here, because they can efficiently work a spot. By controlling the boat as it slowly drifts with the mild current, anglers can present a bait nearly directly under the boat. A jig-n-minnow is ideal for this method, as is working a bucktail jig. Generally, a 1/4-ounce or 3/16-ounce jig is the right weight. Keep the bait just off the bottom as the boat moves along, making adjustments with the reel as the water gets deeper or shallower.

On days when walleyes won't take a jig, they will often respond to a blade bait or spoon. Such baits elicit a reaction strike instead of a feeding one. Shore anglers can score by soaking a lively minnow, sucker or chub on a bait rig.

When walleyes are feeding in the shallows adjacent to a wintering hole, other options work well. Fish using shallow flats below the deep water often will hit a suspending minnowbait. Cast the lure down over the flat and slowly retrieve it against the current, back to the boat. Use just enough speed to keep the bait working. No fancy twitches or stop-and-go retrieves—make it easy for a walleye to eat the lure.



Shallow flats, gravel bars and creek mouths should be the targets of pitched jigs.

Shallow flats, gravel bars and creek mouths should be the targets of pitched jigs. Tubes rigged with insert-style jigheads, as well as ringworms or grubs dressed on a mushroom-shaped jighead, can be used by both shore and boat anglers. Walleyes using these shallows are there to feed. It's not necessary to use a minnow to trigger strikes.

Boat anglers can allow the boat to drift just off the shallows surrounding the wintering hole while they cast the area. Use a slow drag or short hops.

Shore anglers will do well casting such jig offerings over gravel bars at twilight and during cloudy, rainy days. Cast from a variety of positions to present the bait at different angles until you discover the sweet spot. Some evenings the action can continue after dark.

River Saugers

The sauger is a cousin of the walleye. It's native to the waters of the Ohio River Watershed.

Saugers fare better in turbid environments than do walleyes. In our state the fish tend to grow quickly, often attaining legal length (12 inches) by the end of their second year. But as fast-growing fish often do, they physically break down at a rapid rate, too, often dying at a relatively early age. This may explain why saugers taken in Pennsylvania don't attain the size of fish found in more northern parts of its range, where growth rates are slower but fish live longer.

Of the three major rivers in western Pennsylvania, saugers are more prevalent in the Ohio and Monongahela. They are also common in the Allegheny's lower navigation pools. Sauger catches are more sporadic in pools 6 to 9 and the Allegheny's uppermost navigation pools, and rare in the middle Allegheny.

Saugers can be taken with the same approach as walleyes. There have been many days when I've taken both saugers and walleyes from the same spot. Saugers tend to be more aggressive, often hitting a jig or lure with a bit more gusto.

A sauger closely resembles a walleye. It has a more mottled look, though, with three or four dark saddles on its side. The sauger has dark spots on its dorsal fin, and lacks the walleye's white-tipped tail.

Saugers are subject to the same inland seasons as walleyes. They have a creel limit of six fish and a 12-inch minimum length. They have the same succulent, firm flesh as does its big cousin.—*JK.*



Walleye

Sauger

illustrations-Ted Walke

Cast Away

Area 4: Get Ready for Great Ice Fishing

by Art Michaels

The Commission's Fisheries Management Area 4 includes Tioga, Bradford, Susquehanna, Lackawanna, Wyoming, Luzerne, Sullivan and Columbia counties. According to Area 4 Fisheries Manager Rob Wnuk, the ice action this year should be really good.

"In Tioga County, Beechwood Lake, Hammond Lake, Cowanesque Lake and Hills Creek Lake will be your best bets," says Wnuk. "At Beechwood, you'll find an excellent fishery for trophy largemouth bass and big crappies, perch and bluegills. There's also a nice walleye population, and the Commission stocks hatchery trout there late in the winter."

At Hammond Lake, look for excellent action with big crappies.

Cowanesque Lake offers an excellent fishery for trophy muskellunge, Wnuk says. "Muskies tend to prefer the shallower areas at the upper end of the lake, and there's very good crappie and largemouth bass fishing."

Hills Creek Lake is very good for large bluegills with good crappie, walleye, and largemouth bass fisheries.

In Bradford County, says Wnuk, Stephen Foster Lake is a good ice-action bet where you'll find excellent fisheries for yellow perch, crappies, bluegills and largemouth bass.

"Try Quaker Lake in Susquehanna County," Wnuk says. "Quaker is mostly a private lake, but anglers can get to it from the Commission access. It's primarily a stocked trout fishery." Trout are stocked there preseason, inseason and in late winter. The lake can hold trout year-round, so trophy fish are present.

In Lackawanna County, Wnuk suggests Lackawanna Lake, Fords Lake and Merli-Sarnoski Park Lake. Wnuk says that Lackawanna Lake is an excellent bluegill and crappie fishery, and trophy muskies and bass are present. Muskies seem to hang out at the point near Kennedy Creek, in the "neck," and near the main boat launch. Hatchery trout are stocked there in fall and late winter.

"Fords Lake is a very good crappie fishery, and the largemouth bass population there is improving," Wnuk says.

At Merli-Sarnoski Park Lake, Wnuk says to look for very good action with chain pickerel. Hatchery trout are stocked there in the fall.

In Wyoming County, Stevens Lake and Lake Winola are good bets for ice fishing, Wnuk says. "Stevens Lake is a very good fishery for crappies and largemouth bass. Lake Winola is mostly private, but anglers can reach it from the Commission access." Wnuk adds that Winola offers excellent fisheries for yellow perch, bluegills and rock bass. Hatchery rainbow trout there can hold over, so trophy fish are present. The bass population appears to be improving in response to a slot limit regulation.

In Luzerne County, Frances Slocum Lake is very good for crappies. Wnuk says that trophy muskellunge, walleyes and largemouth bass are also present.

Also in Luzerne County, Harveys Lake is mostly private, but anglers can reach it from the Commission access. Wnuk says that Harveys Lake has an exceptional fishery for trophy brown trout up to 12 pounds. Miscellaneous special regulations apply to the trout. Wnuk notes that walleye and smallmouth bass populations are also exceptional there, but these species can be hard to catch, particularly through the ice.

Another Luzerne County pick, Harris Pond is very good for crappies, bluegills and largemouth bass with a fair chain pickerel population.

"Luzerne's Lily Lake is excellent for trophy northern pike," Wnuk says. The pike tend to concentrate at the first point and associated cove east of the Commission access. "Big bluegills, crappies and yellow perch are present there in good numbers, Wnuk adds, and hatchery trout are stocked in fall and late winter.

At Luzerne County's Moon Lake, hatchery trout are stocked in the fall and late winter. Bluegills and largemouth bass are present.

"In Luzerne and Sullivan counties, Lake Jean, in Ricketts Glen State Park, is located on the top of the Allegheny Front, so it's the first to freeze in my area," Wnuk says. "It is affected by acid precipitation, but fish populations appear to be improving in response to biannual liming treatments. Chain pickerel, largemouth bass and yellow perch populations are fair." Additionally, says Wnuk, hatchery trout stocked in April can hold over and provide some action in the winter.

Lastly, Wnuk suggests Columbia County's Briar Creek Lake, which is very good for bass and panfish. Hatchery trout are stocked there in the fall and late winter.



photo-Waterways Conservation Officer Dave Kaneski

According to Area 4 Fisheries Manager Rob Wnuk, the ice action this year should be really good.

Open-Water Winter Panfish

by John Allen
photos by the author



Fishing on a lake in the winter typically makes us think of ice fishing. However, there's almost always a time during late fall and early winter when it's cold but not quite cold enough for the lakes to freeze. This period presents an opportunity that many anglers don't explore—open-water winter fishing for panfish. The challenge can be great at times, but it comes down to knowing the wintertime habits of the fish and having the right tackle.

The most successful anglers during this time are those who are willing to adjust the most. In other words, the angler who is willing to move around to different spots during the day and search for the fish will almost always be consistently more successful than the angler who sits in the same spot to fish. During the winter the fish move as the temperatures drop, and it's up to you to be able to adjust to these movements and find the fish. One fun thing about fishing with bait is that in many locations you will likely encounter different species because most all fish tend to find deeper water during this period. Trout are especially eager to feed during this time, and they can almost always be found in the same locations.



When seeking sunfish, you typically have to open your range and go looking for them.

Tackle, bait

The best tackle you can take along during this time of year is an ultralight rod. The sensitivity allows you to feel even the most subtle strikes, which can make the difference between a bad day and a good day. You'll also want light line, typically 4- to 6-pound test. You'll want hooks ranging in size from 4 to 8, depending on the species you target. I usually prefer baitholder hooks over plain-shank hooks because they help to hold the bait in place much better. When considering which baits to bring, you can usually narrow the selection once you figure out which species you intend to target the most.

Sunfish

When seeking sunfish, you typically have to open your range and go looking for them. Between the time when the surface temperature is below 45 degrees and first ice, the fish tend to move around a lot and be somewhat scattered throughout a lake. More often than not, the one thing that remains constant is that the fish will be in deep water, typically around 20 feet. The fish will normally be swimming around deep, sharp dropoffs, off of shoreline points, and in a lake's deeper bays and coves. I usually troll around these different areas to locate feeding fish.

For sunfish, I use wax worms, maggots, mealworms, nightcrawlers or red worms on a size 6 or 8 hook with one or two BB splitshot, depending on how fast I want to get to the bottom and whether I keep the bait in the water while I troll. I place the shot about 12 to 16 inches above the hook.

My favorite way to fish in these conditions is to drop the bait straight down and then reel in just a little bit after I feel the bait hit the bottom. After that, I just hold the rod straight out and feel for the bite. This is where the ultralight rod really comes in handy—these normally aggressive biters hit much lighter during this time of year.

Yellow perch

These fish tend to be the hardest to find during this time of year because in the fall they typically move into shallower water to feed around rocky shorelines. However, as the water gets colder, most of them will move back into deeper water around the edges of weedy bays, deep dropoffs, and sand or mud flats that are typically in about 20 to 40 feet of water. The schools will move daily until the first ice forms on the lake.

My preferred method is to use a size 4 to 6 hook with either a red worm, nightcrawler or a small minnow (around 2 to 2.5 inches long works best). I also use one or two BB splitshot about 12 to 16 inches above the hook. I fish the bait either just off the bottom in the deeper water or I troll closer to the shallows to find a school. After I catch the first fish in a new location I'll return to that area on other days and fish that area again. Sometimes I quickly find fish again this way.

Crappies

Crappies are a little more predictable than yellow perch during this time of year. The biggest factor in finding crappies is the conditions on that particular day. During most cold or cloudy days, when the air temperature is normally under 40 degrees, the fish tend to move into deeper water between 20 and 40 feet in the main creek channel, off shoreline points, and in deep bays and coves. However, on warmer or sunny days (air temperature above 40 degrees), the crappies will move into shallower water, where they will do their most aggressive feeding of the winter.

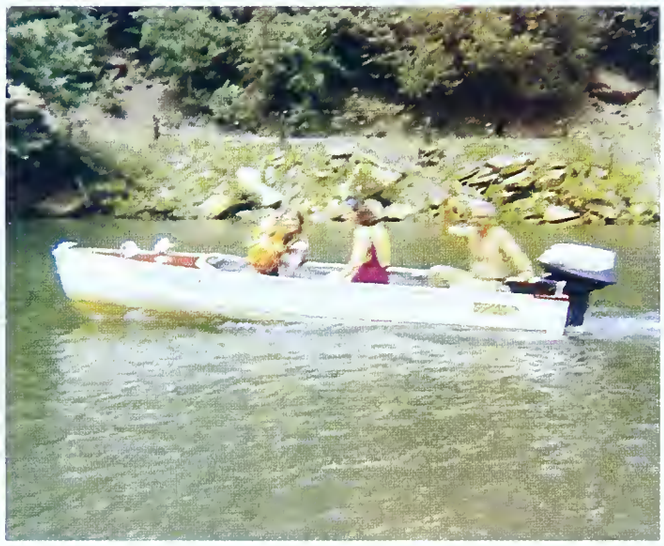
Typically I use a size 4 to 6 hook with one or two BB splitshot and a small minnow, red worm or nightcrawler, but I almost always use a minnow before worms when fishing for crappies. When working deep water, I fish just off the bottom and sometimes slowly troll along an area to find active schools. On warm or sunny days, I rig a bobber about 4 to 5 feet above my bait to help detect the lighter strikes that I normally see from this species. Also, once you find one crappie you will usually find more nearby. So once you catch one, just go back and fish that same area again.

As long as you are willing to search for fish, you should be able to find some open-water success on even the coldest days as winter closes in.

Heading to

I recently received an email from my mother. It was one of those questionnaires, and one question asked about your fondest memory. My mother replied, "Boating with my family." I had the pleasure of growing up in the city of Jeannette. My mother was born and raised in this football town. At one time, it was a booming glass town in southwest Pennsylvania, and it was only one square mile with a population of 14,000. There was no nearby place to go boating or fishing, but my family had a strong boating tradition.

My grandfather purchased a boat for his family in the early 1950s—a 14-foot wooden boat with a red stripe around the top. He named the boat *Donna*, after my mother. My mother recalls that he had two motors for the boat, a 30 horsepower Johnson, which happened to be his last name, and an 18 horsepower Evinrude. His second boat was aluminum with a 30 horsepower Mercury motor.



The author (left, 1-year-old) goes on her very first ride in "the boat."

My grandfather loved to go fast. Every weekend my grandmother would pack up the family, make food and head to the boat. They boated in a few different places. My mother filled me in on all the details. She was 7 years old when this tradition began. She remembers boating every weekend in the spring and summer. My grandparents started out at Loyalhanna Dam. They would go only for the day and return home in the evenings. Many weekends they would meet our cousins, my mother's aunt and uncle and their children. My great aunt and uncle had a larger boat than my grandfather, but my grandfather craved the speed and stuck with the smaller vessel.

My aunt still tells stories of the family picnics. One story that sticks in my mind is how each year my mother and aunt received two new bathing suits. I found this odd since I knew my grandparents lived through the Depression and by no means ever bought excessively. Two suits seemed excessive to me, but they needed two suits because the high sulfur content in the water would turn their suits orange. And one year, my cousin made the mistake of buying a white suit. After the first swim, she got out of the water and to everyone's surprise, the new pearly white suit had transformed into a lovely shade of burnt-sienna orange. We learned a valuable lesson that day. This long-standing boating tradition created a strong bond between my mother and her cousins. They are still close today.

Eventually my family ventured to the Allegheny River above Kittanning, near the town of Elderton, Armstrong County. They camped along a tributary of the Allegheny River. They actually pitched tents, built fires and camped along the river near the train tracks. Back then, the tents needed to be waterproofed each year before they were used. It was my mother's job to sleep out in the tent in the yard while it was raining to see where the leaks were and to report her findings to my grandfather for repairs.

During boating season, he docked his boat all summer for $20 a month. As the years passed, he got to know about everyone. It was like a family relationship. Each family looked out for the other. I was told the story of when one of the neighbor's boats caught fire and everyone was there to help put out the blaze. My grandmother would even water-ski behind the backs of some of the larger boats. It's a little difficult to imagine your grandmother water-skiing, but I wish I could have seen that and photographed it. Gram was a good water-skier and a great swimmer.

I was born in the fall of 1969 and instantly became part of the tradition. In 1971 my grandfather purchased a camper. So now we had hit the big time—a camper, a boat and so many fond memories from those summers. Burnt marshmallows on a stick, sinking bobbers, swimming, walking to the store with my grandmother, penny candy, picnic lunches and campfires, sunburn and mosquito bites. Well, not all memories are fond.

The fondest memory of all was being placed in the front seat in my big orange life jacket. I was captain of the finest boat on the lake, and my grandfather would run that boat seemingly so fast I could barely keep my eyes open. While

the Boat

by Jennifer Bilott

photos courtesy of the author

on "the boat," as my grandfather always referred to it, we were untouchable, kings, high-class citizens and all was right with the world.

As the years went by, I grew and became involved in other things. The boating trips were few and far between and eventually, in 1982, my grandfather sold the camper. It was a sad day for the family. I was fortunate to be able to spend that time with my family. My younger brother, Jeff, however, was born 10 years later than I, and he missed many of those valuable experiences.



The author with her mother, Donna, in 2007 and her grandfather's restored boat.

Last summer, weeks before my grandfather passed away, he gave his boat to my brother. Jeff is an avid fisherman and has tremendous plans for that old boat. We have been fixing it up as a family. My mother arranged to get it painted at the vo-tech school where she worked. My brother is working with my husband to renew the wooden seats. And my father and I can't wait to fish from it.

Boating benefits families. It gathers people together and is the means to form lifelong bonds. It even taught my mom about navigation and how to use the hills and scenery to figure out where you are.

My husband and I are considering buying a fishing boat and starting our own traditions. Mark Duda, executive director of Responsive Management, a public opinion and attitude survey research firm specializing in natural resources and outdoor recreation issues, said, "Satisfaction from boating, as in other types of outdoor recreation, tends to be about escapism, rest, relaxation and social issues around friends and family."

Whatever your preferences may be for outdoor recreation, if you have never tried boating, you should consider it. There is something for everyone—avenues for fishing, water-skiing, camping or a nature walk to escape from real-world stresses or to spend time with family and friends. The memories you make will last a lifetime and will strengthen the glue that bonds families.



The author with her brother, Jeff, and "the boat." Boating and decades of memories have strengthened the author's family ties.

me and My Boating Safety Education Certificate

by Art Michaels

Last July I earned a Commission Boating Safety Education Certificate (BSEC) by taking the PA Basic Boating Course and passing the required exam. A recent beneficial change in Commission policy required my doing so. For years, though, I had mistakenly thought that my taking the course and earning the certificate was unnecessary. The law didn't require it. I've been a boater and owned boats for more than 30 years. I've edited, and in some cases, written the Commission's publications and other items on boating and boating safety. Every year I edit and update the *PA Boating Handbook*. And some years ago I even edited the final exam for the Commission courses that students can take to earn a BSEC. Except for other Commission employees, waterways conservation officers, deputies, and Commission instructors, it's difficult to imagine anyone closer to the information than I am.



photo-Art Michaels

Like passing on a fishing legacy, having your family members earn a Boating Safety Education Certificate is part of your passing on your family's boating legacy.

I thought the experience was going to be downright silly, but it wasn't. When I took the exam, I admit that before answering certain questions I had to consider the choices more carefully than those of other questions: Which vessels were stand-on and which were give-way in certain situations according to the rules of the road; the meaning of buoys with black rectangles and those with a black cross inside a black diamond; on which Pennsylvania waterways flares are required; and specifically when a life jacket has to be replaced.

Taking the course and exam and reviewing all this information in a fresh format also allowed me to gain a deeper insight into boating and boating safely. In addition to structuring the boating safety information in the course, the Commission's Boating Safety Program manager prepares an annual recap of boating accident fatalities. This information is available on the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**. We see the most disturbing connections between the course content and the consequences of boaters' uninformed decisions.

If you're new to boating, you should take an approved boating course and earn a BSEC. You'll discover a wealth of useful information. If you're more of an old hand at it, as I am, earning a BSEC can be a great brushup of your skills, and it can be a practical reminder that your boat isn't just an item of fishing tackle.

Of course, boating safely takes more than just answering multiple-choice questions correctly, but that's a good start to ensuring your safety, your family's well-being, and the safety of those aboard your boat, not to mention your part in keeping other boaters safe.

Note that Boating Safety Education Certificates are required for all personal watercraft operators and for boat operators born after January 1, 1982, who operate motorboats of more than 25 horsepower.

To earn a BSEC, there are two home-study options. You can take the Internet course or order the official video home-study course on boating and personal watercraft safety. This course covers the official material taught in classroom courses.

The 8-hour classroom course, an alternative to the home-study options, is taught statewide by Fish & Boat Commission employees and certified volunteer instructors.

Even if you don't have to take a boating safety course, in addition to the priceless value of increasing your safety, earning a BSEC may make you eligible for boat and personal watercraft insurance discounts.

Let earning a BSEC be a family goal for 2008. For more information on all courses, enter this address into your web browser: **www.fish.state.pa.us/boatcrs/fact_boat-pa.htm.**

Water Rescue Training Saves Lives on the Ice

by Spring Gearhart

On the morning of March 2, 2007, Harrisburg residents spotted a man walking on the ice of the Susquehanna River and called 911. Harrisburg River Rescue was dispatched to assist Harrisburg Police, but they were not able to reach the man before he fell off the ice into the cold water. The victim floated down the river about 50 feet.

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commissioner and Harrisburg River Rescue Chief Steven Ketterer was the first responder on the scene. Ketterer, a Pennsylvania water rescue instructor for over 20 years, entered the frigid 38-degree water wearing a drysuit and other personal protective gear to tie a safety line to the victim and to keep the man's head above water. After several unsuccessful attempts to pull the man and Ketterer onto the ice, emergency rescuers lifted the man from the water and pulled him to shore using a specially designed ice rescue craft. Ketterer was also pulled from the water. Both the victim and Ketterer were treated at a local hospital for hypothermia.

"My water rescue training and skills kicked in as my first reaction was to keep his head above water and keep him conscious. He kept pulling me down and yelling—don't let me die," said Ketterer. With one hand on the rope and the other hand around his waist, Ketterer was determined not to let the victim go under. "As he was losing consciousness, I just kept yelling—we're going to get you out of here— to keep him awake," said Ketterer.

Ketterer has been on the River Rescue team for 34 years. This was his second ice rescue in 10 years. The water rescue training he received from the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission has resulted in saving many lives throughout his career.

Pennsylvania's Water Rescue Program, initiated by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, is the largest nonprofit, public water and ice rescue training program in the United States. The program provides water and ice rescue training to fire and rescue crews throughout the Commonwealth. Nearly 20,000 students have been trained and certified in water and ice emergency techniques since the program began in 1983.

The Water Rescue curriculum consists of four courses: Water Rescue and Emergency Response (16 hours), Emergency Boat Operation & Rescue (16 hours), Advanced Line Systems Rescue (16 hours), and Ice Rescue and Emergency Response (16 hours). All courses meet or exceed National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1670 guidelines.

"The safety of our citizens is greatly enhanced by having thousands of people trained in rescue techniques," says Commission Executive Director Douglas J. Austen. "This is a very important program by the Fish & Boat Commission and a service we are proud to provide."

For more information on the Pennsylvania Water Rescue Program, go to the Commission's web site **http://www.fish.state.pa.us/boatcrs/waterrescue/000index.htm** or email ra-be@state.pa.us.

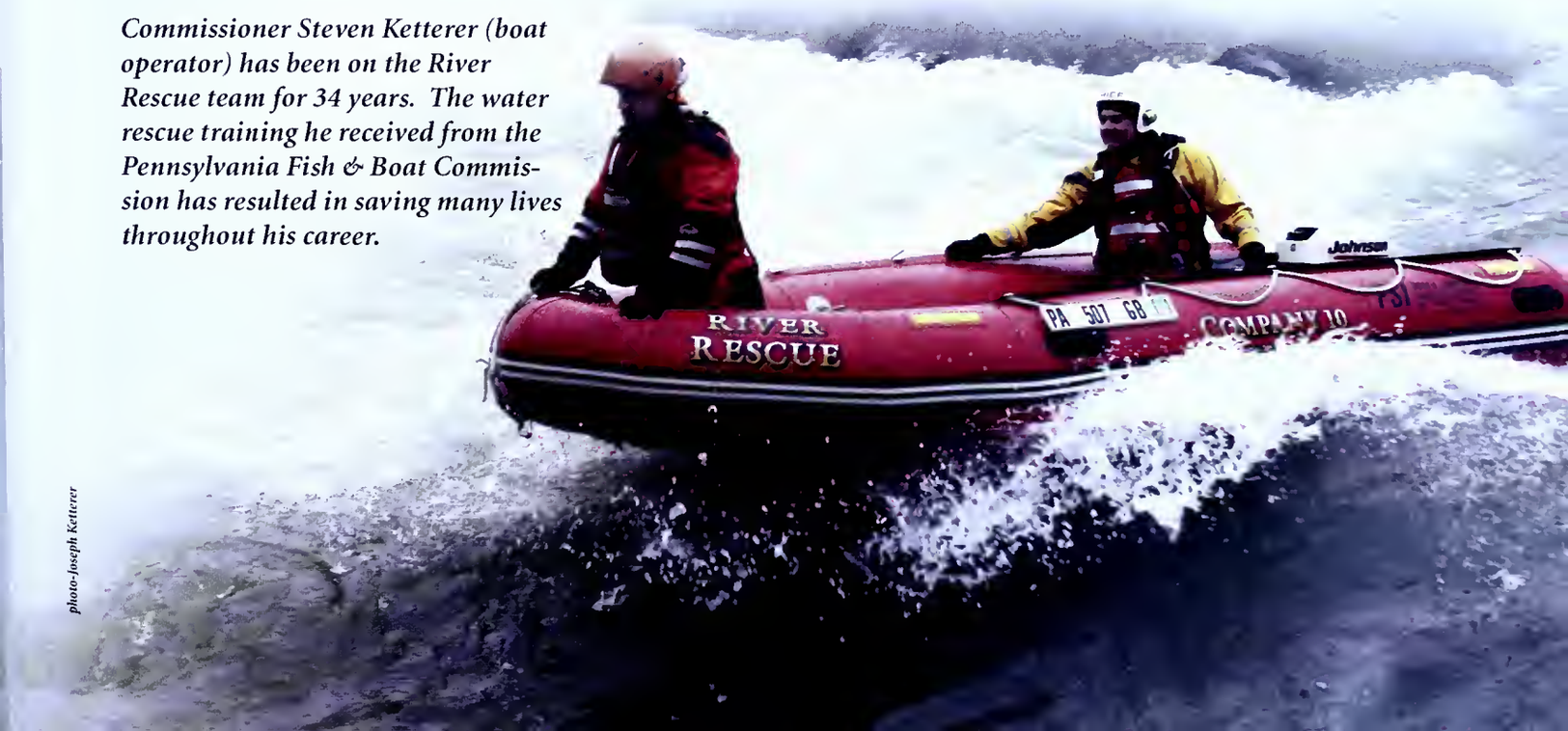


photo-Joseph Ketterer

Commissioner Steven Ketterer (boat operator) has been on the River Rescue team for 34 years. The water rescue training he received from the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission has resulted in saving many lives throughout his career.

Southeast PA's Early Ice Opportunities

by Vic Attardo



Hopewell Lake is great for large crappies and perch with some nice bass and pickerel.

photo-Vic Attardo

In good years—good the way an ice angler thinks of it—the waters of Peters Cove on Lake Ontelaunee will turn white and crystallize by mid-December so that it's possible to glide out with sled, auger, bait and tip-ups and work the first breakline out from the old railroad tracks.

With an early ice you can intercept bass in the limpid grass that manages to survive the onset of winter. In the bitter cold, largemouth will stay surprisingly shallow in Peters Cove, from 4 or 5 feet to about 10 feet. The wide cove, which is more like a major bay, doesn't get much deeper than that except out toward the main lake. The ill-defined channel that runs toward the back of the cove is often the key location, but hungry bass spread out to the adjacent flats and around the one narrow point.

It would be something if this were a secret, but it isn't. Like shoppers counting the days until Christmas, many ice anglers know the ways of Peters Cove, as well as the rest of Lake Ontelaunee and other southeast Pennsylvania impoundments, where the early ice is hot, and they wait for the moment the store opens.

Besides Ontelaunee in Berks County, good early ice fishing can often be found at Locust Lake in Schuylkill County, Mauch Chunk Lake in Carbon County, Leaser Lake in Lehigh County and Antietam Lake in Berks County. In general, if a southeast PA lake has a considerable amount of shallow water and is located either in a higher elevation or near Blue Mountain, fishable ice is likely to occur there quicker than in other southeastern locations.

The exceptions to the geography and early season rule are Hopewell Lake and Scotts Run Lake near the Berks/Chester County line. While these two impoundments don't freeze quite as fast as the others, their initial safe ice often offers such fine fishing that these two impoundments beg to be mentioned.

Last year, while most of the lakes noted above had reasonable ice at a reasonable time, larger impoundments, like Beltzville Lake on the north side of Blue Mountain, didn't harden at all and only shallow areas acquired fishable ice. Tuscarora Lake, very near Locust Lake in Schuylkill County, is another geographical exception. A considerable portion of the lake is quite deep, and Tuscarora sometimes doesn't freeze quickly—as was the case last year. However, when Tuscarora does harden, its stocked trout offer a great place to go. In addition, Tuscarora and Locust lakes hold their ice longer than many other lakes in the region.

Once hard water has set in, trying to decide where to go becomes a matter of personal preference and favorite targets. For instance, Mauch Chunk is a panfish lake that also produces some walleyes at night. Antietam has wonderful stocked trout with some quality panfish. Leaser Lake has excellent stocked

trout as well as pickerel, perch and bass. Ontelaunee is famous for its largemouth bass but also produces beautiful pike and pickerel and is loaded with small bluegills, white perch and very admirable crappies. Hopewell Lake is great for large crappies and perch with some nice bass and pickerel, while Scotts Run Lake is best for stocked trout. Locust Lake is stocked with trout in mid-December, and trout and pickerel have been its stronger species.

Proceeding alphabetically by county, a good early stop is Antietam Lake in Berks County. Though only a 17-acre irregular oval, Antietam is a favorite for trout. The hill-encircled impoundment has a rounded bottom with not much structure, so trout tend to circulate in small schools. If you sit with jigging rods braced on buckets and dangle tiny ice jigs with larvae, you're likely to get two or three hits at once and then sit through a long dry spell as the trout move around the lake. On good days they come back many times and they're worth the wait.

Hopewell Lake in Berks County is nearly 70 acres and it's one of my favorites anywhere. I regularly get my largest crappies from this impoundment in French Creek State Park, and while I'm waiting for the calicoes I often land fine yellow perch and largemouth bass. A few areas of the lake are hot, including the upper end (closest to the parking area but farthest from the dam), the wide oval toward the dam and the zone out from the park's swimming pool.

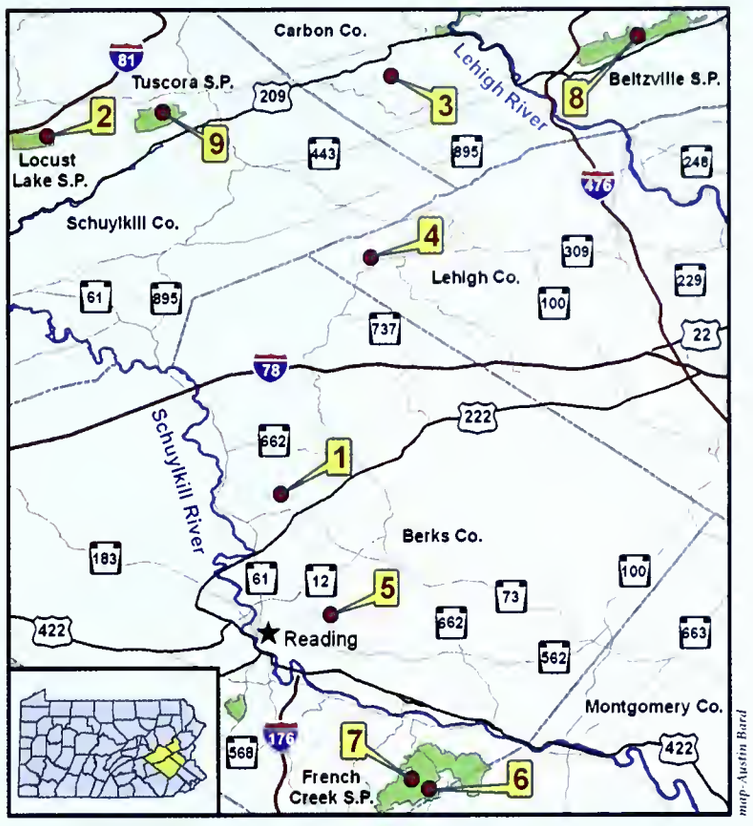
Scotts Run Lake, in the same state park, is a pleasure to fish for trout. Typically the best early area is along the shore against the parking area because that's where the stocking truck makes its delivery. However, as the season spreads out, so do the trout. Scotts Run is only 21 acres, but it actually "fishes big"—there's enough room for everyone. Basically that's because Scotts Run has little winter structure—it's mostly a bowl—so the trout circulate.

In Carbon County you want to work around "Boat Launch B" on Mauch Chunk Lake. In addition, the indented coves on the parking area side of this 330-acre impoundment are also hot when it's cold. Night walleye anglers work out much deeper, and that ice fishing is in a world all its own.

With the dam scheduled for repair, maybe Leaser Lake will attain the size of its former 117 acres. However, even when it's not swollen it still provides very good winter trout, bass, pickerel and panfish.

The problem at this Lehigh County impoundment is that it doesn't have the shoreline structure it once did—at least structure that is ice-covered—and you have to fish what water there is. At the same time, the bottom of Leaser Lake is as bouldery and grass-filled as they come, and there is plenty of cover for all species. I think that's what makes the half-size lake still so good.

Locust Lake in Schuylkill County is another place where the docking of the stocking truck usually dictates the best early ice fishing. The 52-acre impoundment is bordered by a large dam that stretches across its eastern end. There's a boat ramp at the northeast corner and the trout like to gang there early. In fact, most of the northern shore from the ramp down to the playground is a good early ticket.



Southeast PA's Early Ice Opportunities

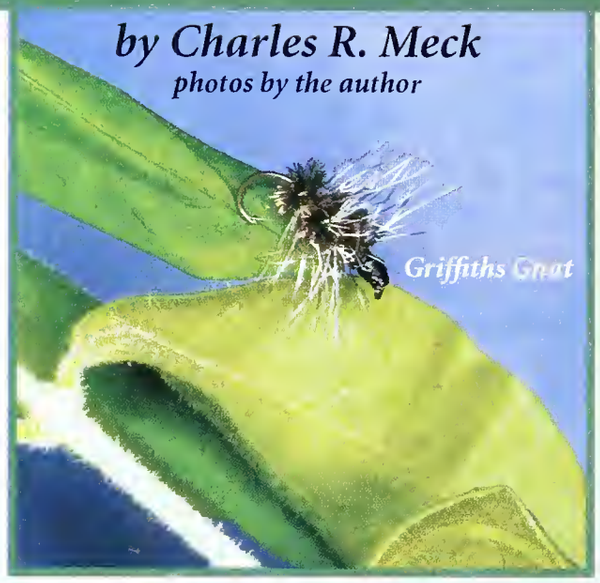
1. Lake Ontelaunee, Berks Co.
2. Locust Lake, Locust Lake State Park, Schuylkill Co.
3. Mauch Chunk Lake, Carbon Co.
4. Leaser Lake, Lehigh Co.
5. Antietam Lake, Berks Co.
6. Hopewell Lake, French Creek State Park, Berks Co.
7. Scotts Run Lake, French Creek State Park, Berks Co.
8. Beltzville Lake, Beltzville State Park, Carbon Co.
9. Tuscarora Lake, Tuscarora State Park, Schuylkill Co.

If my cold feet were to the fire I'd say that Tuscarora Lake, in the state park of the same name, is the most beautiful impoundment in the region and that it can offer fantastic fishing for trout. I caveat with "can" because I'm still stinging from my last visit when I caught only one trout—because of the bluebird skies, I think—but normally I have to return trout here because I catch a ton. This lake also has some big yellow perch, but you have to fish down toward the dam and way out in the center over deep water. Some years Tuscarora Lake has large pickerel and some years they're just snakes, but laying out some wire is usually worth the effort.

No matter when the ice comes—as long as it does come—southeast Pennsylvania lakes offer some surprisingly good winter opportunities. Make the rounds of these impoundments and pretty soon you'll join the ranks of the "Frozen Chozen."

Griffiths Gnat

by Charles R. Meck
photos by the author



Although the Griffiths Gnat is a highly productive pattern the entire year in Pennsylvania, it can be especially effective during the winter. It should be useful because it copies many common midges, or chironomids, found on our waters, and many of these insects appear throughout much of the colder part of the year.

This tiny fly often works best for highly selective limestone trout.

The pattern is also simple to tie. Most fly-tiers can tie the pattern in a minute or less. Just add a small grizzly hackle to a body made from a peacock herl, tie the fly on a size 18 to 24 hook, and you have the well-known Griffiths Gnat. The fine gold rib on the body is optional. The ribbing does, however, reinforce the fragile peacock body.

I have also seen some expert anglers tie this pattern on a size 10 or 12 hook, add 10 wraps of .010 lead to the shank, palmer the peacock body with a shorter-than-normal grizzly hackle and fish it near the bottom. This larger wet fly is a top producer, even in the winter.

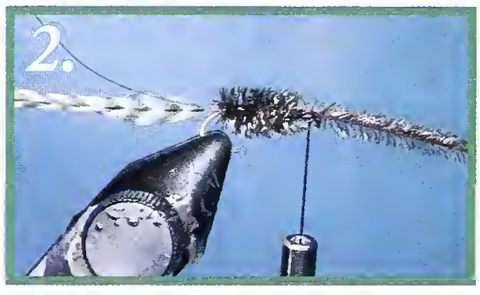
Don't be without this critical, highly important midge pattern. Even though trout often feed on the pupal stage of the midge, for some unknown reason they often take this dry fly. This small fly may be just the ticket that saves you from a barren day.

The Prince Nymph

Hook: Size18 to 24 dry-fly hook.
Thread: Black, 6/0, or smaller.
Tail: None.
Body: Peacock herl.
Ribbing (optional): Fine gold wire.
Hackle: Grizzly hackle, palmered.



1. Tie in fine gold wire, peacock herl and grizzly hackle at the bend.



2. Wind the peacock herl forward to the eye, covering the body completely.



3. Rib the body four or five times with the fine gold wire.



4. Palmer the grizzly hackle up the body. You should wind the hackle four to six times for a size 18 to 22 fly.



5. Cut off the excess wire, herl and hackle.



6. Finish the head, whip finish and cement.

Fishing the Griffiths Gnat

by Carl Haensel

On a warm winter day, you may see a handful of fish near the surface rising. Keep your eyes peeled, and if you see one that is rising consistently, start fishing a Griffiths Gnat.

The Griffiths Gnat is a fly that does a good job imitating a small cluster of midges. Very small versions of the fly can imitate individual midges. The hackle on the fly makes it one of the most buoyant small flies available to the fly angler. Midges are way-too-small flies that can hatch at any time of the winter or summer. Anglers often ignore them in summer in favor of fishing to more interesting larger hatches, though they can be important insects to replicate on the trout stream year-round. It is significant to note that midges are "true" flies, and go through four life stages, egg, larva, pupa and adult. Larva and pupa patterns are important cold season flies to fish as well. On very cold streams and "tailwater" rivers or streams that are the outflow of a large reservoir, midges can be the primary insect species that an angler will see trout feeding on throughout the season.



photo-Carl Haensel

Anglers often ignore midges in summer in favor of fishing to more interesting larger hatches, though they can be important insects to replicate on the trout stream year-round.

When fishing a Griffiths Gnat or any other midge pattern, keep in mind that using a small-sized tippet is a must. The pattern will not act naturally as a size 20 or 22 fly if it is fished on anything heavier than size 5X tippet. Size 6x or 7X is by far preferable. Drag is a significant issue with small flies, and the areas that trout feed on midges accentuate this problem. You will rarely ever find a trout feeding on midges in the winter in a riffle or run. Often you will see them sipping them off of the surface in the back of a slow pool or glide. The clear glassy water in these sections, often clearer in winter than any other time of the year, offers the trout ample opportunities to determine that your fly is a fake. Fool them in this situation by presenting the fly to them from upstream. Stay out of the water if at all possible. Not only is it cold, and hypothermia always a danger, but trout taking midges will often spook if waves of water are pushed their way by an angler. Casting so that your fly is the first thing that the fish sees is a good option. A pile cast that allows the leader to unfurl slowly as it drifts toward the fish will ensure a drag-free drift, and is an option to pursue also. Keep as little slack line in the main floating section of your fly line as possible if you try this technique, however. The additional slack line in your leader will make it harder to move all of the line for an effective hook set. Anglers having a hard time seeing the tiny fly can try fishing it as a trailer pattern behind a larger dry fly. If there are other insects out on the water, a small parachute Blue Wing Olive would be a good option as a lead fly, if there are mayflies about. Small winter stoneflies can often be hatching at the same time as the midges, and while a very dark fly, they can make an effective lead fly in size 14. If you are looking for something larger, an Elk Hair Caddis is never a bad option. While you will not likely see any caddis hatching during the winter months, anglers will often be surprised when a well placed caddis draws a strike, even if they haven't been seen by the trout for quite some time. Anglers should remember that fly presentation is often more important than pattern selection when it comes to convincing a fish to take your fly.

Understanding Deep-Cycle Marine Batteries

by Chris Gorsuch

photos by the author

During a full day on the water, the outboard may run only an hour all day long. But the trolling motor will be active for six or more hours during every trip. The heart of this unit is the pair of deep-cycle batteries under the front deck. With all the advances in battery technology during the last 20 years, there are many battery options. There are some misconceptions about the advantages and benefits of the types of deep-cycle offerings. Consider the characteristics of each to get beyond any confusion.

There are three types of marine deep-cycle batteries on the market: Flooded cell, gel and AGM. Each of these is well-suited to powering trolling motors and each has been used in the marine industry for years. It's important to understand the qualities and basic construction of each type. Once there, use the information to help find the best type of deep-cycle battery for your specific needs. There is no one conclusive solution—much depends on the size of the trolling motor, how often it's used and how hard it's used.

Flooded cells

Flooded acid batteries have been around for over 100 years and they are still an excellent choice for boating. In many cases they are second to none. Deep-cycle batteries have thicker plates than cranking batteries. This quality allows them to handle deeper discharging and ultimately provides longer life cycles. Generally speaking, the heavier the flooded cell battery in a given group size, the thicker the metal plates.

As the battery ages, temperature cycles, charging and discharging all contribute to electrolyte evaporation. For those batteries with removable caps, the electrolyte must be replenished to keep the battery capacity in tact. For those that are maintenance-free, there is no way to replenish the lost fluid. When significant evaporation occurs, the battery must be replaced.

Flooded batteries are susceptible to vibration. When broken or tipped, they can leak acid wherever they are stored. This can cause significant damage to the battery and the storage area.



Deep-cycle batteries have thicker plates than cranking batteries. This quality allows them to handle deeper discharging and ultimately provides longer life cycles.

Gel cells

Unlike flooded acid batteries, the electrolyte in a gel battery has been congealed by the addition of silica gel. The process turns the liquid electrolyte into a thickened gel-like substance. This is how the battery gets its name. The electrolyte gel is immobilized between the plates. Gel cell batteries can't be spilled even if the battery tips, cracks or sustains damage.

Once charged, the self discharge rate is only 1 to 2 percent per week. There are special charging requirements regarding gel batteries. Because of the gel's higher internal resistance, these batteries must be charged at lower voltages than flooded or AGM batteries. They are also more susceptible to heat. Speed or quick charging isn't a safe option for many gel batteries. Improper charging can result in long-term battery damage. When improperly charged or overheated, permanent holes or voids can develop in the gel, impeding acid flow. The result is a loss of battery capacity.

AGM battery

AGM stands for absorbed glass mat. Unlike flooded batteries, in which diluted sulphuric acid completely covers lead plates, the electrolyte is absorbed between the plates in a tight mesh of fiberglass. Another term is "starved electrolyte," because the fiber matting is only 90 to 95 percent saturated. With no electrolyte liquid, there is nothing to leak, spill or freeze.

AGM batteries are a true maintenance-free battery. Water loss is reduced by 99 percent because oxygen and hydrogen are recombined in the battery itself. This term is called "recombinant." Virtually no water is lost over time.

Like the gel cell, the self discharge rate of an AGM battery is only 1 to 2 percent. Another benefit is that this type of battery has the lowest internal resistance of any manufactured deep-cycle battery on the market. Internal resistance is only 2 percent with an AGM. This internal resistance is important for several reasons. First is that it can be charged at a faster rate without damaging the battery.

Battery selection

One common misconception is that there is a power advantage between the three battery types. This notion isn't accurate. If a battery is rated for 100 amp hours (Ah) at a 20-hour rate, it will produce the same output results whether flooded, gel or AGM. When comparing battery types and brands, it's important that the ratings are all based on a 20-hour rate.

So what does "AMP hour rate" mean? In simple terms, it is the amount of time in hours that a battery will last at sustained amperage draw before the battery reaches 100 percent DOD (depth of discharge). A trolling motor that draws 50 amps at the maximum speed setting will last 2 hours at that maximum speed before the 100Ah battery reaches 100 percent DOD.

	Flooded	AGM	Gel
Spill-Proof / Shock-Resistant	No	Yes	Yes
Immune to Freezing Damage	No	Yes	Yes
Charge at Higher Voltages	Yes	Yes	No
Suitable for Engine Cranking	Yes	Yes	No*
Speed / Quick Charge	Yes	Yes	No
Higher Charge Rates	Yes	Yes	No
100% Maintenance-Free	No	Yes	Yes
Self Discharge Rate	10-13%	1-3%	1-3%
Charge Efficiency	90%	98%	98%
Price Per Battery	$70+	$150+	$175+

* Most gel battery manufacturers warn against engine cranking

There are indeed advantages and disadvantages based on the type of battery you choose. Above are the focus points for selecting the battery type that best fits your specific need. Traditional flooded-cell batteries are far less expensive and tend to weigh less than gel or AGM batteries of the same size. They fit well with a variety of charging systems and have a long legacy of solid performance. AGM and gel have a much lower self-discharge rate and will hold a full charge longer than flooded-cell batteries. AGM and gel are leakproof and 10 times more shock-resistant than flooded batteries. These kinds of batteries also offer no maintenance and are sealed against fumes. They will also survive extreme cold without freezing.



During a full day on the water, the outboard may run only an hour all day long. But the trolling motor will be active for six or more hours during every trip. The heart of this unit is the pair of deep-cycle batteries under the front deck.

Battery life

A question that also gets a lot of mileage is battery life. Technical notes on the number of life cycles from various manufacturers will range from as low as 500 to as high as 2,000. Frankly, there are too many factors to provide an accurate answer. The best guidance is two to six years for a marine battery. As for the number of cycles, that can be enhanced by your care and charge procedures. Depth of discharge was discussed earlier. A battery that averages 50 percent DOD will last two to three times longer than a battery that averages 80 percent of drawdown. Selecting a deep-cycle battery with the capacity to meet your daily needs without completely depleting the charge is money well-spent.

Improper charging habits can also lead to shortened battery life. Reducing the time a battery sits uncharged will add longevity to the battery. As a practice, charge deep-cycle batteries the moment you arrive home from a trip. Use a quality three-stage charger that brings the battery up to charge and maintains the battery. The first stage is the bulk charge in which amperage is maximized to a safe level for charging to bring the battery up to charge. The second stage is the absorption charge in which voltage is constant but the amperage slowly diminishes. The final stage is called the float charge. The float charge trickle-charges or uses a pulse-width modulation to sense when the battery voltage is dropping and sends small pulses to keep the battery at 100 percent.

18th WCO Class Graduation

by Spring Gearhart

photos by the author

Ten members of the 18th Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) class graduated from training during a commencement ceremony held August 10 in the State Capitol Building, Harrisburg.

Executive Director Douglas J. Austen, Ph.D., Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, presided over the ceremony. The Honorable Joseph H. Kleinfelter, Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas judge, gave the oath of office. District Judge Brian W. Edgcomb delivered the keynote address. Class president Robert A. Plumb spoke on behalf of the graduates. Presentation of diplomas and recognition awards followed.

The Edward W. Manhart Academic Achievement Award was presented to Jeremiah D. Allen for maintaining the highest grade point average during training. Recognition awards were presented to Robert A. Plumb (firearms training), John G. Hopkins (leadership), and Darrin W. Kephart (leadership). Congratulations to the 18th WCO class.

Graduate	Assigned To
Jeremiah Allen	Southern Pike/Northeastern Monroe Counties
John Hopkins	Southcentral Crawford/ Eastern Mercer Counties
David Hurst	Cumberland County
Darrin Kephart	Southern York County
Gregory Kraynak	Southern Luzerne County
Douglas Kunkle	Delaware County
Robert Plumb	Northern Pike/ Southern Wayne Counties
Brendan Ryan	Northern Bucks County
Jeffrey Sabo	Northampton County
Jeffrey Schmidt	Southern Lancaster County

WCOs perform specialized duties in law enforcement, fisheries conservation, watercraft safety, education, and public relations.

Graduates complete 754 hours of municipal police officer training including all aspects of police work, basic law, investigation techniques, first aid, CPR, firearms, patrol vehicle operation, crimes code, and unarmed self-defense.

In addition, graduates complete conservation officer training at the Commission's H.R. Stackhouse School of Fishery Conservation and Watercraft Safety in Bellefonte. The conservation officer training curriculum includes boat operation, boating-under-the-influence detection and apprehension, accident investigation, fish, reptile, and amphibian identification, water pollution investigation, public speaking, standard operating procedures, Pennsylvania fishing and boating laws and regulations, federal fish and wildlife laws, and field training. The WCO training program is 52 weeks long.

There are over 90 commissioned officers throughout the Commonwealth.

To become a waterways conservation officer or for more information, contact the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission at 717-705-7861, visit the Commission's website at **www.fish.state.pa.us**, contact the State Civil Service Commission at 717-783-3058, or visit the State Civil Service Commission's website at **www.scsc.state.pa.us**.



Bureau of Law Enforcement Director Thomas J. Kamerzel (left) and Sarah Manhart (right) present WCO Cadet Jeremiah D. Allen with the Edward W. Manhart Academic Achievement Award for maintaining the highest grade point average during training.



The posting of the colors.



WCO Cadet Darrin Kephart with his brother Quentin Kephart at the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission headquarters following the graduation ceremony.



The Honorable Joseph H. Kleinfelter, Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas judge, gave the oath of office as part of the graduation ceremony.



The 18th WCO Class includes (from left) David Hurst, John Hopkins, Jeffrey Schmidt, Gregory Kraynak, Brendan Ryan, Darrin Kephart, Douglas Kunkle, Jeremiah Allen, Robert Plumb, and Jeffrey Sabo.



Illustration-Ron Kuhn

by Valerie Pettigrew Tarkowski

I GOT ONE! I GOT ONE!

One Christmas at the age of 10, my parents gave me a special watch. I remember it, though I'm not sure why, and its specialness isn't clear anymore, but it sits in my jewelry box today anyway.

Something else that Dad gave me has survived the test of time without my knowing it, and it isn't something material. It's respect, not just for my elders as I was taught, but for our fishing and boating resources.

There was nothing more exciting on a Friday afternoon than Dad saying we were going fishing in the morning. I knew what that meant, and I could hardly contain myself. Poor Dad, the rest of the afternoon he had to listen over and over again to, "Is it time yet? Is it dark enough yet? Can we do it now?"

We'd gather the flashlights, coffee cans and old sneakers, put on a jacket and wait with anticipation. We were going nightcrawler hunting. There was nothing better. I still get that giggly, squirmy feeling when I think about it.

Of course, this was all back in the early 1960s, when worries about drought or how much water was used for what didn't seem to matter. Today those concerns are much more important.

Dad would remove the nozzle from the hose and place it on the ground in the middle of the yard. He always seemed to know just the right spot. Then he'd turn on the water and let it run, soaking deeply into the ground.

More waiting, and it seemed like hours before he'd let us go out there. Then it was time, finally. We'd sneak out and tiptoe around the soggy yard until we saw one of their little heads sticking out of its hole—big, fat, squiggly worms. The fish loved them.

One of us would take a dive into the grass to grasp our prey and we'd squeal and yell, "I got one, I got one!" Then the competition was on to see who could catch the most. By the time our bait was in a container for the next morning's outing, we were exhausted and Dad stood there smiling.

The next morning as Dad helped us put the fish's food on our hooks, we'd recall who caught it, and if it didn't bring a fish, it was that person's fault.

We packed a lunch and spent the day by the water. Dad never got much fishing in helping five of us with our bait, fish and line, but he didn't seem to mind too much. What he taught me, without "preaching," was to treat the area we were using as if it were our own, to pack out what we packed in along with what others left behind, and to keep only what was worthy of eating and only as much as we would use. He also taught me about dragonflies and the water.

These aren't the sorts of things children remember. But as kids become adults and reflect on their lives, these things seep into their thoughts and behavior, and through some mysterious process, they become our values.

An overwhelming, indescribable feeling came over me as I sat on my porch on a cool, damp summer evening last year. I was staring into the flowerbeds not having a thought. The mulch was rising up and settling back down again—probably from a mole or a vole. Then my husband came out and stood there staring as well. Next thing I knew he had a coffee can in his hand and was out in the yard diving to his knees yelling, "I got one, I got one!"

Dad taught me that if I took care of things, they would last forever. Maybe Dad didn't realize he was giving me something, and maybe that's why it's so clear in my mind today. He taught me by example, and I learned from what I saw him do.

Thanks, Dad, for all the great things you gave me, especially the ones that can't be kept in a jewelry box.

I'm still an angler today, packing out what I pack in and much of what others leave behind. And hoping that I've given my children some of what my father gave to me—respect for the resource.

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R. B. Winter State Park, Halfway Lake, Mifflinburg.

photo-Spring Gearhart

Tying the Knot

by Deborah Weisberg

Tying the knot has double meaning for Bob and Dorothy Bish. When the Dubois couple married 64 years ago, they committed to be lifelong fishing partners as well.

"We're great anglers," said Bob, a retired service station owner and World War II Navy veteran who met Dorothy when the two attended high school in New Bethlehem. Now 84, they married when Bob was on leave as a Signalman Second Class at Sampson Naval Base near New York's Finger Lakes. Dorothy was working at a plant that made radio tubes for the war.

Shortly after the wedding, Bob was sent to Scotland and assigned to a landing craft that delivered light-medium tanks to Normandy's Utah Beach on D-Day. "We came under fire 18 times and had three men wounded, but we all survived," said Bob, who was then sent to the South Pacific for the invasion of Okinawa. After Japan surrendered, he was among those who accompanied the first occupational troops to northern Japan. When Bob thought of home, he longed to return to his young bride and the trout streams he loved to fish in the mountains of Pennsylvania.

"We were awful busy in the war," he said, "but, oh, my, I missed them."

When the couple reunited, they spent a lot of time at their camp on the Clarion River and at northwestern Pennsylvania lakes. "Dorothy didn't fish until we got married, but she took to it right away and we've been enjoying it together ever since," said Bob.

Although the Bishes have been vacationing for years near Pymatuning Reservoir, 10 years ago they bought a 38-foot trailer and now spend their summers at a campground on the Pennsylvania side of the lake. "We have great neighbors who help us if there's anything we need," said Bob. "And they wait for me to bring in fish. We target mostly walleyes and perch."

Pymatuning is also a gathering spot for the Bishes' extended family, which includes seven grandchildren in their 20s and 30s and five great grandchildren ranging in age from two years to 10.

Of the Bishes' three children—Bob, Patty and Dick—the sons inherited their parents' passion for angling. "When we were kids, they would take us to the Clarion River, and no matter how cold it was or how much snow was on the ground, we'd fish for suckers on Sunday mornings," said Dick.

Bob competes in bass tournaments. Dick, a former deputy game protector with the Pennsylvania Game Commission, has a pontoon boat and keeps a trailer near his parents' trailer. "We like our own 16.6-foot bass boat because it's good and safe and steady," said his father. "But every once in a while, we'll go out on Dick's boat because it's a lot of fun, too."



photo courtesy of Robert Bish

Although Bob has always emphasized safety, he fell into Pymatuning on a windy day several years ago, as he pushed his boat from the dock. "He hit his hand on the dock as he fell, but he fished all day with my mother and other family friends," said Dick. "When the pain got bad enough, he went to the hospital. It turned out he'd broken his wrist. He went home with his arm in a cast."

That Christmas, Robert and his wife, Ruth, gave Bob and Dorothy life jackets. "Since the kids bought them for us, we've never missed a time wearing them. We've got them on right now," said Bob, who was speaking on a cell phone from the middle of the lake. It was the weekend preceding the couple's 64th wedding anniversary, July 6, which would include a fish fry. "We're working on that now," Bob said, with a laugh.

Bob and Dorothy both say there's no secret to their long, happy life together, including hundreds of hours in a boat with few squabbles they can remember. "I might have learned to fish because I wanted to make Bob happy," said Dorothy. "But I found I loved being in the outdoors. So I guess you'd say it's a little of both—that I like doing what Bob likes but I also do it for myself."

Dick said his father has always looked after his mother, although her independent streak comes through. "In the past year, she's gotten impatient with how dad baits her hook, so now she puts on the minnows and worms herself," said Dick. "But she still lets dad take her fish off the hook."

Bob said Dorothy has out-fished him many times, but he's proud of her, not jealous. "We don't compete," he said. "I'm about as pleased for her when she catches a fish as when I catch one myself."

2008 Seasons, Size

COMMONWEALTH INLAND WATERS

(includes the Youghiogheny River Lake and does not include special regulation areas or endangered and threatened species not shown on this chart)

Species	Seasons	Minimum Size	Daily Limit
ALL SPECIES OF TROUT AND SALMON Additional regulations may apply- *see Trout Regulations*	Regional Opening Day of Trout Season* - March 29 at 8 a.m. through Sept. 1 (only 18 southeastern PA counties)	7 inches	5-streams, lakes,and ponds (combined species)
	Regular Season - April 12 at 8 a.m. through Sept. 1	7 inches	5-streams, lakes,and ponds (combined species)
	Extended Season: Approved trout waters and all waters downstream of approved trout waters. Jan. 1 through Feb. 29 and Sept. 2 through Dec. 31	7 inches	3 (combined species)
BASS-*LAKES* Largemouth, Smallmouth and Spotted Additional regulations may apply- *see Big Bass Regulations*	Jan. 1 through April 11 and Nov. 1 through Dec. 31	15 inches	4 (combined species)
	April 12 through June 13	NO HARVEST - *Catch and immediate release only (no tournaments permitted)*	
	June 14 through Oct. 31	12 inches	6 (combined species)
BASS-*RIVERS AND STREAMS* Largemouth, Smallmouth and Spotted Additional regulations may apply- *see Big Bass Regulations*	Jan. 1 through April 11 and Oct. 1 through Dec. 31	15 inches	4 (combined species)
	April 12 through June 13	NO HARVEST - *Catch and immediate release only (no tournaments permitted)*	
	June 14 through Sept. 30	12 inches	6 (combined species)
Muskellunge and Tiger Muskellunge**	Open year-round	40 inches	1 (combined species)
Pickerel**		18 inches	4
Northern Pike**		24 inches	2 (combined species)
Walleye and Saugeye (Hybrids)	Jan. 1 through March 14 and May 3 through Dec. 31	15 inches	6
Sauger		12 inches	6
American Shad ***	Open year-round	No minimum	6
American Shad	Open year-round - Lehigh River, Schuylkill River**** and tributaries	No minimum	1
American Shad, Alewife, Blueback Herring	**CLOSED YEAR-ROUND Susquehanna River and tributaries**		
Hickory Shad ***	**CLOSED YEAR-ROUND**		
Herring, Gizzard Shad ***	Open year-round	No minimum	50 (combined species)
American Eel	Open year-round	8 inches	50
Striped Bass and Striped Bass/ White Bass Hybrids	Open year-round	20 inches	2 (combined species)
Sunfish, Yellow Perch, White Perch, Crappies, Catfish, Rock Bass, Suckers, Carp, White Bass and other gamefish not otherwise listed Additional regulations may apply- *see Panfish Enhancement Special Regulations*	Open year-round	No minimum	50 (combined species)
Baitfish/Fishbait (except Mudbugs)	Open year-round	No minimum	50 (combined species)
American Eel (as Baitfish)	Open year-round	6 to 8 inches	50
Mudbugs (Dragonfly Nymphs)	Open year-round	No minimum	Unlimited if taken from lakes, ponds, swamps, and adjacent areas. 50 per day if taken from moving waters (rivers and streams)
Paddlefish	**CLOSED YEAR-ROUND**		

Seasons, sizes, and creel limits – Except for trout season, which begins at 8 a.m., all regulatory periods in the fishing regulations are based on the calendar day, one of which ends at midnight and the next of which begins immediately thereafter.

* Includes only those waters in 18 southeastern PA counties and two waters crossing from those counties listed in the **Regional Opening Day of Trout Season Program.**

** Except those species in waters listed in the **Brood Stock Lakes Program**. Tiger muskellunge is a muskellunge hybrid.

*** Unlawful to take, catch, or kill American shad, hickory shad (endangered species), alewife, and blueback herring (collectively known as river herring) in the Susquehanna River and all its tributaries.

**** Schuylkill River upstream of the I-95 bridge and its tributaries.

NOTE: It is not a violation of the bass regulations if a bass is immediately returned unharmed to the waters from which it was taken. It is unlawful for an angler to cast repeatedly into a clearly visible bass spawning nest or redd in an effort to catch or take bass.

NOTE: For bass regulations, power dam pools and recreational dam pools on the Susquehanna River and navigational dam pools on the Ohio River drainage are "rivers."

NOTE: Approved trout waters are closed to fishing from March 1 to the opening day of the regular trout season in April, unless included in the **Early Season Trout-Stocked Waters Program or Regional Opening Day of Trout Season Program.**

NOTE: Landlocked alewife less than 8 inches in length taken from inland ponds, lakes, or reservoirs that are collected by legal means may be harvested for use as baitfish.

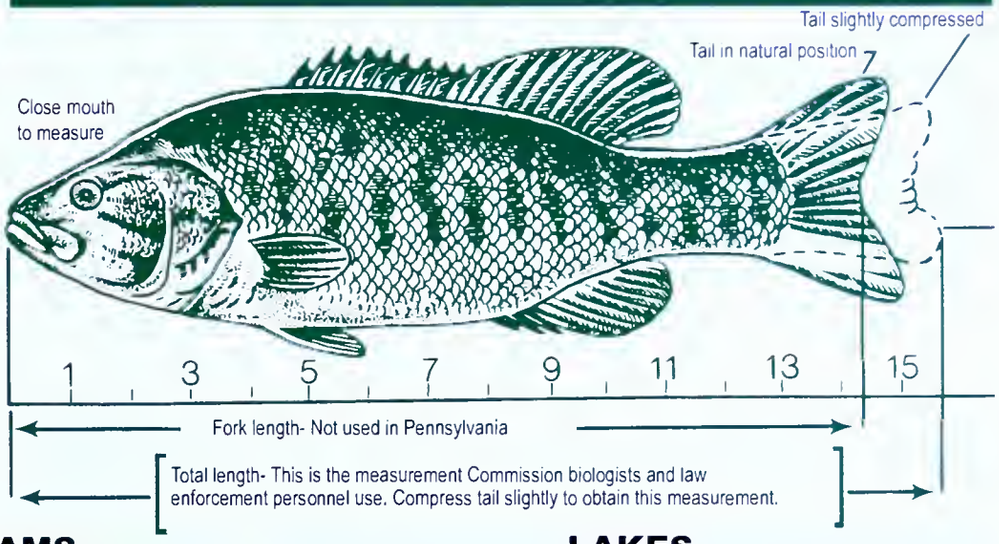
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BIG BASS PROGRAM-SPECIAL REGULATIONS

These special regulations apply to largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass in the waters listed below. Approved trout lakes that are in the Big Bass Program are closed to all fishing from March 1 until the opening day of the trout season, unless listed in the Early Season Trout-Stocked Waters Program **(indicated below by an asterisk)**. Those lakes designated below with an asterisk are closed to fishing from April 1 until 8 a.m. on opening day of trout season. For all other species, inland regulations apply. **NOTE:** For purposes of this section, power dam pools and recreational dam pools on the Susquehanna River and navigational dam pools in the Ohio River drainage are "rivers."

HOW TO MEASURE A FISH



RIVERS AND STREAMS

Season	Minimum Size	Daily Limit
Jan. 1 through April 11 and Oct. 1 through Dec. 31	18 inches	2 (combined species)
April 12 through June 13	NO HARVEST - Catch and immediate release only (no tournaments permitted)	
June 14 through Sept. 30	15 inches	4 (combined species)

LAKES

Season	Minimum Size	Daily Limit
Jan. 1 through April 11 and June 14 through Dec. 31	15 inches	4 (combined species)
April 12 through June 13	NO HARVEST- Catch and immediate release only (no tournaments permitted)	


Smallmouth Bass


Spotted Bass


Largemouth Bass

Waters Governed by These Regulations

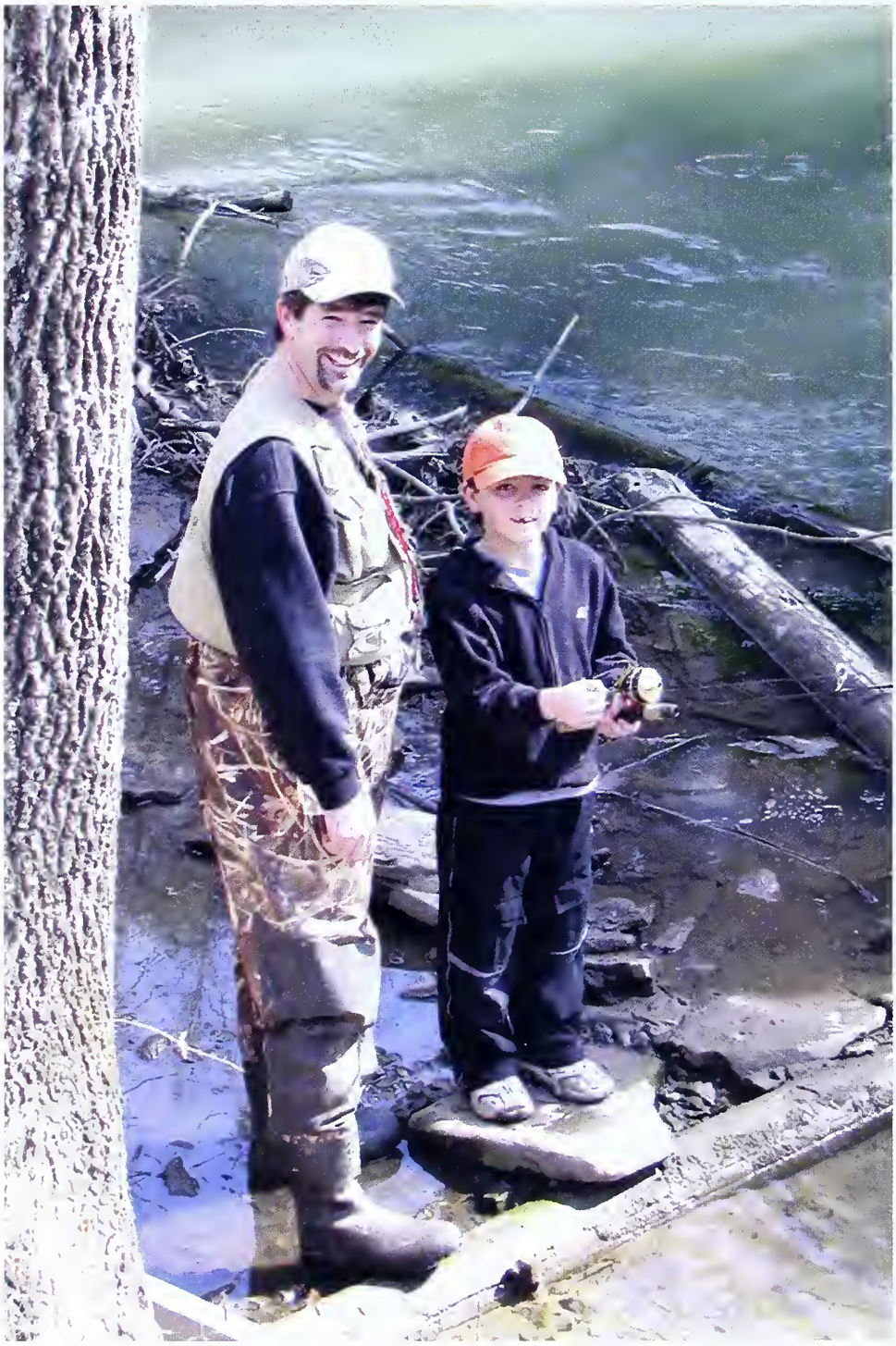
County	Water
Allegheny	Upper, Middle and Lower Deer Lakes
Allegheny	North Park Lake
Armstrong	Keystone Lake
Beaver	Lower Hereford Manor Lake*
Beaver	Brady Run Lake*
Berks	Blue Marsh Lake
Berks	Carsonia Lake
Berks	Hopewell Lake
Berks	Kaercher Creek Lake
Bedford	Shawnee Lake (State Park)
Blair	Canoe Lake (State Park) to include two small ponds and raceway adjacent to Canoe Lake*
Bucks	Lake Towhee
Bucks	Nockamixon Lake (State Park)
Butler	Glade Run Lake*
Butler	Lake Arthur (Moraine State Park)
Cambria	Beaverdam Run Reservoir
Cambria	Duman Dam*
Cambria	Hinckston Run Reservoir
Cambria	Wilmore Dam
Carbon	Mauch Chunk Lake
Centre	Colyer Lake
Chester	Chambers Lake
Chester	Marsh Creek Lake (State Park)
Clarion	Kahle Lake
Crawford	Sugar Lake
Crawford	Tamarack Lake
Cumberland	Opossum Creek Lake
Cumberland	Susquehanna River**
Dauphin	Susquehanna River**
Fayette	Mill Run Reservoir
Indiana	Yellow Creek Lake (State Park)
Jefferson	Kyle Lake
Juniata	Juniata River***
Juniata	Susquehanna River**
Lackawanna	Lackawanna Lake (State Park)*
Lancaster	Speedwell Forge Lake
Lancaster	Susquehanna River**
Lebanon	Memorial Lake (State Park)
Luzerne	Frances Slocum Lake (State Park)
Luzerne	Harris Pond
Luzerne	Lily Lake*
Lycoming	Rose Valley Lake
Mercer	Shenango Lake
Montour	Lake Chillisquaque
Northampton	Minsi Lake
Northumberland	Susquehanna River**
Perry	Holman Lake (Little Buffalo State Park)
Perry	Juniata River***
Perry	Susquehanna River**
Snyder	Susquehanna River**
Somerset	Lake Somerset
Somerset	Quemahoning Reservoir
Venango	Justus Lake*
Washington	Cross Creek Lake
Wayne	Lower Woods Pond
Westmoreland	Bridgeport Reservoir
Westmoreland	Keystone Lake (State Park)*
Westmoreland	Lower Twin Lake*
Westmoreland	Mammoth Dam*
Westmoreland	Northmoreland Lake*
Westmoreland	Upper Twin Lake*
Wyoming	Stevens Lake
York	Lake Marburg (Codorus State Park)
York	Lake Redman
York	Lake Williams
York	Pinchot Lake (State Park)
York	Susquehanna River**

** closed to fishing from April 1 until 8 a.m. on opening day of trout*
***Susquehanna River from Holtwood Dam upstream to the inflatable dam near Sunbury*

****Juniata River (31.7 miles) from SR 0075 bridge at Port Royal downstream to mouth*

Memories of Family Fishing Adventures

by Marcus Schneck *photos by the author*



Memories of family fishing adventures sometimes involve monster trophies and massive battles on big waters. At other times, they are as simple as a canoe and a father with questionable balancing abilities.

The latter is my 14-year-old son's current favorite. He managed to cling to the gunwale and rode out the spill, staying relatively dry, particularly in comparison to his old man.

It was the first day of trout season on northwestern Lehigh County's Leaser Lake, where a long-standing drawdown has left the normal launching facilities high, dry and unusable. Special, long-term temporary facilities have been carved into what was formerly the lake bed, and for most boaters they perform just fine.

At about 6:30 on first-day morning, however, we combined the discovery of a particularly slanted spot with poor launching technique to convert our gear-loaded canoe into an amusement park ride that promptly flipped to the side and hurled me into the shallow, shoreline water.

Luckily, for a soaked angler in the final 90 minutes or so before the opening of the season, it was another unusually warm trout opener and no frenetic trip back to the vehicle for dry clothes was needed. A re-launch simply involved gathering the gear that had been spilled, removing any that remained in the craft, flipping the canoe to dump the water, reloading and pushing off from a more balanced spot.

The whole affair lasted maybe 15 or 20 minutes and preceded a day of catching one trout after another, but it's the temporary and admittedly comical failing of my outdoor skills that have lived on in my son's repertoire of fishing stories. Memories of family adventures in the outdoors can be like that. Some are built on the downside, which often becomes funnier when retold from a warm and dry retrospective.

Of course, big fish can make for some big family tales as well. Position a 6-year-old behind a stout fishing pole and 2 feet of bull-headed carp on the opposite end of the line, on a summer

afternoon on the Susquehanna River, and a memory is sure to emerge.

No one cares that the carp is the easiest big fish to catch in Pennsylvania, always hungry for everything from doughballs and corn to minnows and crayfish to bait-shaped lures. That really is not a concern, when the kid is shouting things like, "It's running away and I can't stop it," or "I didn't know a fish could be this strong."

Unlike the time and effort that many big fish demand, carp are regularly hooked auxiliary to efforts focused on other species, ranging from bass to catfish to sunfish. As a result, the catch rate can be encouraging for a new angler, and the big fish—the carp—is a bonus that carries the memory of the outing to a new level.

Sometimes big memories come from small fish. Such is the case for my son and a 4-inch brook trout in Lycoming County's English Run.

A few years ago the Fish & Boat Commission decided to try a stocking of brook trout in the rushing mountain stream that flows through Little Pine State Park, a long-term favorite of the state park system in our family. It was to be the first time in many years that the stream was to be stocked for the first day. In addition to offering the chance to camp out for the first weekend of trout season—always a preference in our family—there was the possibility that relatively few anglers would choose to change their first-day location to try a small stream they had never previously fished.

That latter possibility became a startling reality at 8 a.m. the first day, as our group shared a couple of miles of stocked trout water with only a handful of other anglers. Hole after hole presented itself, packed with stocked brook trout that had yet to be fished, throughout the day.

At one point in the morning, my then 10-year-old son hooked his first brook trout. To this day four years later, he still recounts the brilliant colors of the fish: The crimson dots inside bright-blue halos along its sides, the bright orange-yellow of the belly, the camouflage mottling of greens across the back.

The same trip carries a different memory because of the trip's camping-out nature. We extended the concept of family that weekend to include three other 10-year-olds and their fathers from my son's Cub Scout pack. In addition to fantastic fishing both Saturday and Sunday, it was a weekend of meals prepared over open fire, including fresh-caught trout; of time away from the stream spent exploring with friends his own age; and of competition between young, emerging angling skills.

Other memories are made much closer to home and with much less time commitment.

The bullhead catfish of Kernsville Dam on the Schuylkill River at Hamburg in Berks County are a favorite target for our family. Just 7 miles from our home, at the end of a dead-end lane, in the shadow of the Cabela's mega-store, lay broad, slow waters that are packed with fish ranging from smallmouth bass to trout. It's the bullheads, eager to suck up every nightcrawler offered to them, that are my son's favorite, gaining that honored position when one of them became one of the first fish he ever caught.



A similar water of quick and easy access, with a ready supply of hungry fish, exists close to every Pennsylvania resident.

Kernsville is an easy trip for us. Just chuck some rods, hooks, weights and a box of nightcrawlers in a vehicle; drive just a few miles; set up the folding chairs; bait the hook; cast the line; break open a refreshing drink; sit back and take in the scenery; and wait.

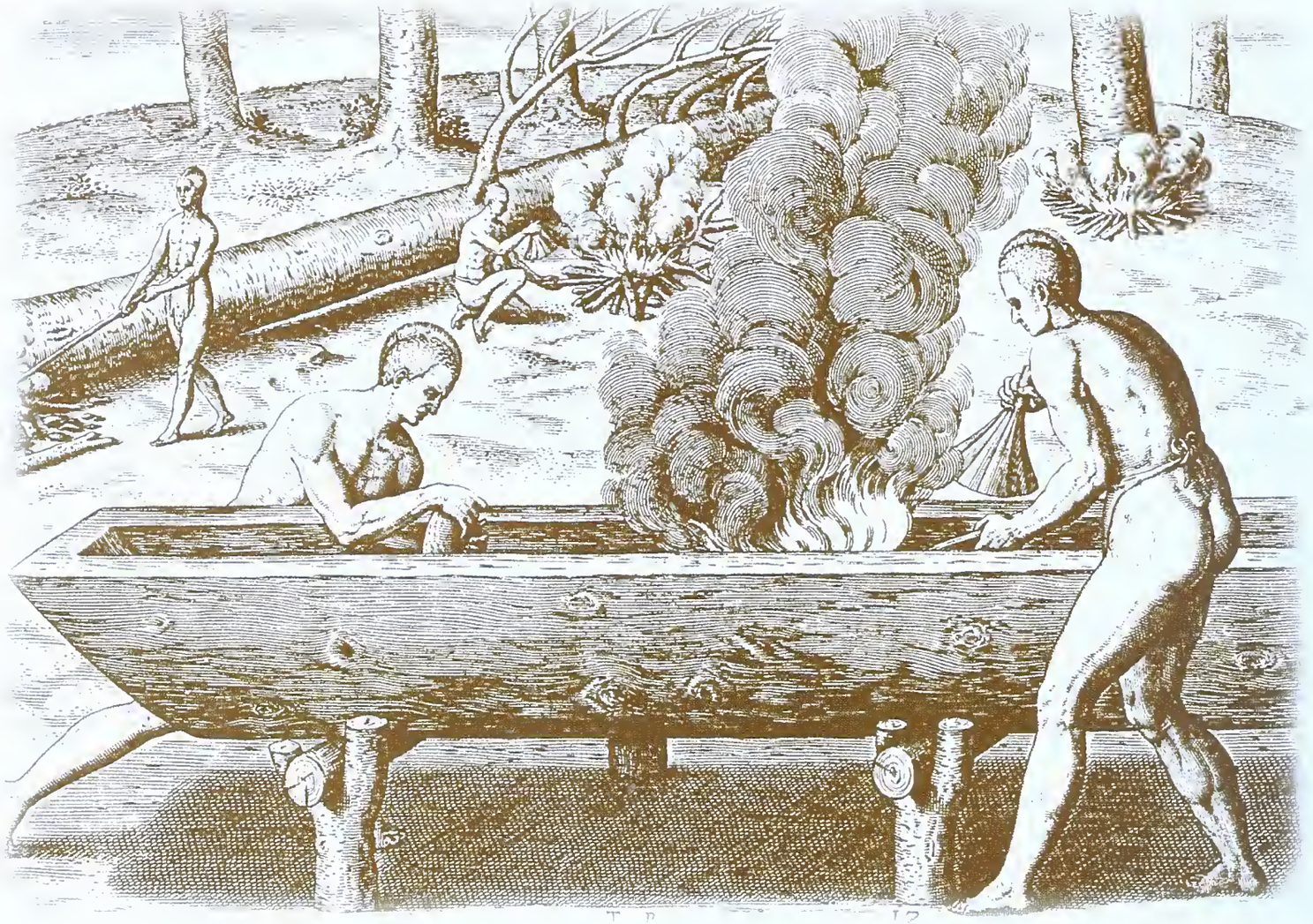
A similar water of quick and easy access, with a ready supply of hungry fish, exists close to every Pennsylvania resident. It's just a matter of planning to take advantage of the opportunities, and then planning to bring new and different opportunities into the family's fishing memory bank, be that a trip that also incorporates camping or camping with some friends, or a bit of travel to a different type of water than the kids have ever fished.

Essentials for Family Outings

It's easy to decide that a camera is an extra piece of gear that maybe can be left at home from an outing that already seems heavy on the gear and gadget front. Don't make that mistake. The memories are made on the water and you'll want your photos to record that part of the experience. In addition, fresh-caught fish make for much more attractive photos than those that have been hanging on a stringer for half a day. And in this day of catch-and-release fishing, there likely might be no fish for photos after the fact.

Another essential for any outing with the family is refreshment. Well-hydrated family members are generally more pleasant to spend time with, more alert to the experience and less inclined to begging to go home. Similarly, a simple snack at just the right point in an outdoor adventure can extend the time on the water and leave a much brighter memory in its wake.

And don't forget the dry change of clothes—for kids and adults.—*MS.*



BROWN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

The Pennsylvania Dugout Canoe Project

by Kurt W. Carr, Douglas C. McLearen, James Herbstritt, and Andrea Johnson

Water trails aren't new. In fact, the following article details information about those who created Pennsylvania's original water trails and how they plied our waters.

Then: Imagine the sight of individuals clad only in loincloths, furiously chipping at a large felled log, slivers of wood flying high above them, and smoke curling upward from sections of the burning tree as they carve out a dugout canoe.

Now: In painstakingly precise recreations, archaeologists of the Bureau for Historic Preservation (BHP) of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) have created three such vessels during the past decade in an innovative outreach program, the Pennsylvania Dugout Canoe Project, which has educated thousands of visitors about this fascinating aspect of travel by Native Americans.

A dugout canoe—often known simply as a dugout—is a hollowed-out log used as a watercraft. It's typically made in a cycle of burning the log with a controlled fire and then scraping and chopping out the charred and softened wood with a variety of tools as diverse as shells, stone adzes, and wooden scrapers. The dugout is most likely the earliest form of constructed watercraft in the world, and European examples have been dated as being nearly 10,000 years old. In both North and South America, dugouts had been the main form of water travel since Native Americans ar-

rived from Siberia more than 16,000 years ago. In the eastern United States, dugouts are preserved in the lakes and bogs of Florida, Louisiana, North Carolina, Tennessee, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. The oldest of these dates to more than 6,000 years before the present (BP).

The discovery of an oak example in Savannah Lake, Ohio, 30 dugouts in 1985 at North Carolina's Lake Phelps, and 100 "log boats" at Newman Lake in Florida in 2000, reinforces the belief that these canoes were common in prehistory and played a significant role in the movement of goods, people, and ideas. Based on early descriptions of Native American vessels, including the well-known accounts of Captain Arthur Barlowe (1550-1620), an English explorer and protégé of Sir Walter Raleigh, and John White (1540/1550-1608), artist and governor of the Lost Colony of Roanoke, Virginia, archaeologists possess some idea of construction methods and variations in size and shape. Although both Barlowe and White described a process of burning and scraping logs with shells to fashion such canoes, they do not mention the use of stone axes or adzes.



PHMC BUREAU FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION/PHOTO BY DON GILES

In the southwestern United States, the 16th-century Spanish navigator and conquistador Hernando de Soto (1500-1542) encountered huge dugout canoes—measuring nearly 100 feet—on the Mississippi River carrying between 75 and 80 warriors, with 25 paddlers on each side. Carved from a single log, these dugouts were heavy, but proved to be swift and navigable. They were used in local and distant trading and for fishing, hunting, gathering expeditions, and during warfare.

In the Keystone State, fewer than 20 dugouts have been documented in bogs and lakes, primarily in the Poconos. Based on tool marks and narrow side walls, most are historic in age and were crafted with metal implements. Joseph A. Baker, a historic preservation specialist for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, in 1998 contended that the greater number of historic dugouts compared to prehistoric examples most likely represents the burgeoning of the fur trade in northern Pennsylvania during the 17th century. It's also believed that in Pre-Columbian times, by AD 1550, many of the lakes in this region would have had at least one resident dugout for hunting, fishing, and gathering.

Since their weight and bulkiness made them extremely difficult to transport over land, dugout canoes were probably not moved between lakes but most likely stored yearround at the lake where they were made. Once taken out of water, they are prone to cracking and deterioration. Evidence exists that, in the winter, Native Americans may have filled their canoes with rocks and sunk them below the freeze line to escape being crushed by ice and to keep them from being damaged by repeated freezing and thawing.

Although many recognize the portable birch bark canoe as a Native American watercraft, this type of vessel was rarely used in Pennsylvania. Such canoes could be made only in regions to the north where birch trees grew to a sufficient size to allow for their construction.

PHMC archaeologists staged the most recent Pennsylvania Dugout Canoe Project in September 2005 as a public exhibition at Fort Hunter Mansion and Park, a historic house, museum, and recreational area overlooking the Susquehanna River located five miles north of center-city Harrisburg. During this project they interacted with more than 6,000 visitors in a 17-day period. At least three individuals worked between six and eight hours each day. One of their goals was to use tools of the type that would have been available to prehistoric peoples of Pennsylvania. With the assistance of professional experimental archaeologist Jack Cresson, of Moorestown, New Jersey, the archaeologists constructed one metarhyolite and four basalt adzes that they hafted to hardwood handles.

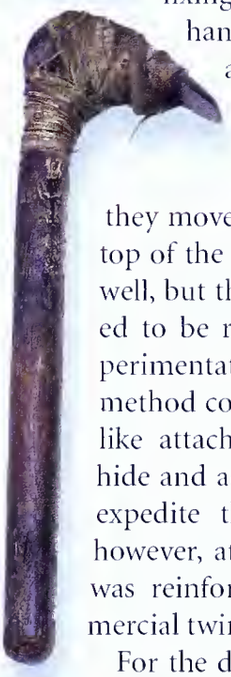
Project participants ground, shaped, and polished the basalt adzes; grinding each consumed eight hours. The early process was not without its drawbacks, though, and



PHMC BUREAU FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION/PHOTO BY DON GILES

A 1590 engraving (facing page) by Theodore De Bry,* The Manner of Makinge Their Boates, *after a John White painting, illustrates prehistoric technique for log canoes. Fire, authentic tools, and volunteer labor created a 20-foot dugout in 2005 (above).





ultimately evolved into a routine of trial and error. For instance, the initial low edge angles of the blades broke, requiring them to be increased. The most difficult aspect of constructing these tools was affixing the blades to the wooden handles. In their first attempts, archaeologists attached the blades to the bottom of forked branches, but the handle broke quickly and they moved the cutting surface to the top of the fork. This position worked well, but the tools loosened and needed to be reattached. After some experimentation, the most successful method consisted of sinew (a tendon-like attachment), covered with rawhide and adhered with pine pitch. To expedite the experiment, however, at least one adze was reinforced with commercial twine.

For the dugout itself, the team began with a white pine log measuring approximately 20 feet that had been donated and delivered by the staff of Michaux State Forest, a tract of 85,000 acres in Adams, Cumberland, and Franklin counties. A storm had toppled the tree about seven months earlier. As a model for the watercraft's design, participants used a circa AD 1250 dugout from Mud Pond, near Pleasant View Summit, in eastern Luzerne County, now on exhibit at The State Museum of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg. The canoe was discovered by a group of boys in Mud Pond in 1935 and donated to the museum in 1968.



Archaeologists began work on the canoe by cutting and charring the ends of the log to bevel the bow and stern, exercising extreme caution to make sure they did not excessively thin these areas. They finally shaped the bow and stern with the adzes they had meticulously fashioned, and then dished out the top of the log by repeating a pattern of burning, chopping, and scraping the charred area. The burning facilitated the removal of wood, but the last firing also hardened and preserved it. By the fifth day of burning, the log's side walls were sufficiently thinned so that the tops of these areas, the gunwales, were covered with clay before additional burnings to prevent additional charring. Each morning the team applied a layer of clay insulation to the gunnels and ignited a fire the length of the dugout, which they allowed to burn for two to four hours. They then removed the charred material by scraping the interior with beveled pieces of wood and stone adzes. Scraping progressed slowly as workers removed less than three-quarters of an inch daily. Nearing completion, they rubbed the rough surface of the interior with sandstone to reduce splinters and increase comfort. For the final treatment they applied pine tar mixed with hot wood ash as a sealant, after which they smoothed the coating by abrading it with fine wood chips and hand rubbing it with medium-coarse sand.



PHMC BUREAU OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION/PHOTO BY DON GILES

The working part of the project concluded on Sunday, October 2, 2005, with a four-hour maiden voyage on the Susquehanna River, from Fort Hunter Mansion and Park to Harrisburg's City Island, about five miles to the south. Four paddlers began the journey, but because the water level was so low the trip became grueling and two disembarked midway. Those aboard experienced little trouble with stability but did note that the vessel was heavy, causing it to hit rocks throughout the journey, which made steering difficult.

The 2005 Pennsylvania Dugout Canoe Project enabled PHMC staff archaeologists not only to test theories and experiment with Pre-Columbian construction techniques and tools, but it also educated and informed thousands of individuals, young and old, who visited the site. They further expanded the successful outreach program in January 2006, when they exhibited the dugout canoe at the 90th annual Pennsylvania Farm Show, an eight-day extravaganza that drew nearly a half-million visitors to Harrisburg. During the event, archaeologists and volunteers provided visitors with information on dugouts found in the East, described their methodology, and illustrated the dramatic results—both the canoe and the prehistoric "tool kit" with which they made it. The dugout will return to Harrisburg each January for the Pennsylvania Farm Show—much to the delight of thousands of visitors who eagerly look forward to learning even more about this unusual watercraft!

For more information, visit the BHP's page on the PHMC's web site at **www.phmc.state.pa.us**, where an ex-

tensive presentation graphically chronicles the Pennsylvania Dugout Canoe Project.

Kurt W. Carr is the archaeology education coordinator with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's (PHMC) Bureau for Historic Preservation (BHP). Douglas C. McLearen is chief of the BHP's Division of Archaeology and Protection. James Herbstritt works with the Commonwealth Archaeology Program. Andrea Johnson worked with the Commonwealth Archaeology Program.

This article originally appeared as an installment of "Hands-On History," a regular feature of Pennsylvania Heritage, *published by the PHMC and the Pennsylvania Heritage Society.*

Launched in 1974, *Pennsylvania Heritage* is a national award-winning magazine published by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the Commonwealth's official history agency, and the Pennsylvania Heritage Society (PHS), a group of citizens dedicated to helping preserve and share the history and heritage of the Keystone State. Published quarterly, *Pennsylvania Heritage* is recognized for its array of insightful and meaningful articles, as well as for its lively design and copious illustrations, including rare and vintage images, drawings, maps, and documents—many in full color! Intriguing interviews with individuals who have helped shape Pennsylvania's history and culture—PBS children's program host Fred Rogers, actress Kitty Carlisle Hart, movie-maker Ronald F. Maxwell, historians Michael Novak and David McCullough, and writer James A. Michener—bring history to life for readers of all ages. In addition to major feature articles, readers enjoy regular departments, such as book reviews, biographies, and news of ongoing and upcoming events, among them historic house tours, military encampments, crafts demonstrations, museum exhibits, genealogy workshops, and much, much more. *Pennsylvania Heritage* is available as a membership benefit of the PHS for $25 yearly. To begin enjoying the best of the past today, telephone toll-free 1-866-823-6539, e-mail c-kvansick@state.pa.us, or visit **www.PAbookstore.com** online.



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PHMC BUREAU OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION/PHOTO BY DON GILES

After more than 350 hours of labor, the dugout successfully navigated the Susquehanna River in Dauphin County. Heavy on land, the canoe is navigable in water.



PHMC BUREAU OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION/PHOTO BY DON GILES

TANDEM STREAMERS:

Not Just for Trolling Anymore

by Linda Steiner
photos by the author

The tandem streamer fly is said to have originated in Maine. For me, the tandem streamer will always be associated with the upper Delaware River and Joe Tweedle, of Mountain Top, Pennsylvania.

I can still hear Joe laughing, and I remember the *ga-whoosh* of big brown trout as they rolled in the river at the end of his fly line. I could only imagine how they looked. What I saw was black; we were night-fishing.

Some years ago Joe introduced me to fly-fishing, fly-tying, the upper Delaware River and tandem streamers. Toward the end of his fly-tying class, he demonstrated how to tie a tandem streamer. Joe tied it for the same reason that it was developed, but with a twist in application.



Tandem streamers resembling yellow perch (top) and a Royal Coachman-like pattern.

The Maine anglers were reportedly looking for a fly that fish wouldn't short-strike when they were trolling. Trolling flies was then and is still the primary method used for catching trout in New England lakes. The Maine anglers tied the two hook shanks together after filing off the eye of one, making a sort of piggyback hook. The initial design helped, but it still produced short strikes because the long hackles extended past the second hook.

Maine angler Emile Letourneau is credited with having refined the tandem idea. He linked two hooks with a short length of gut or wire between to create one large streamer fly. He positioned the second, trailing hook so that it was at the farthest end of the front hook's hackles. The original fly was said to look like a smelt.

The tandem streamer effectively reduces the likelihood of an angler missing a short-striking fish that grabs the tail of the fly. And the second hook on the fly acts like the rear set of hooks on a plug-type lure.

A fishing axiom is that to catch bigger fish, use bigger bait. Fly-rodders are limited in this unless they want to throw large, heavy flies on large, heavy fly rods. The tandem-tied streamer fly is the answer to casting a big fly with very little weight.

For New England-style lake trolling, a long cast with fly and line high in the air isn't necessary. Just pay out the line and drag the fly behind the boat. So why use a tandem streamer fly? To fit the bill, an ultra-long-shanked single-hook fly might need to be 3 to 6 inches long yet have a size 6 or 8 gap. Such a big hook would have a lot of stiff metal, and what wary fish is likely to engulf that?

Instead, the tandem streamer fly mimics a jointed plug's lifelike motion. Today's tandem streamer, with a length of heavy monofilament, flexible wire leader or fly line connecting the front and rear hooks, moves minnow-like through the water. It can be tied 3 to 6 inches long, or more, depending on the connector's length. The hooks can be as small or as large and heavy as the fishing requires.

I still have some of the tandem flies that Joe tied for fishing the upper Delaware. I don't believe he reinvented the tandem streamer, but instead, at that time, northeastern Pennsylvania fly-fishing still had close ties to the sport as it was practiced in New York's Catskills and in New England. He likely was acquainted with trolling tandem streamers; he just revised them for casting in Pennsylvania streams.

The tandem streamer is still a large wind-resistant fly, and very light rods and wispy tippets don't cast them well. But with a medium-weight fly rod (6-weight and up) and tippet suitable to turning it over during the cast (experiment for the size of the tandem streamer used), it can be sent out into a stream easier than a large, single-hook streamer.

The 3-inch tandem streamers that Joe gave me weigh a scant fraction of an ounce. They're just two size 6 or 8 hooks, some long saddle hackle, a little bucktail, tinsel, thread and the connector monofilament. They're no harder to cast than two big wet flies fished in tandem, which in a way is what they are, with extra long dressing on the first fly and a very short piece of line between them.

In explaining his tie of the tandem streamer, Joe said he wanted beefiness in the finished fly as well as light weight

and flexibility. So he tied plenty of material onto the first hook so that a big trout would grab it and feel the "meat," not the metal.

Four long hackles, the length of the fly to be created, are "married" together. The butts are tied near the first hook's eye, the feathers top-side out so that they lie flat along the flank. The tapering hackle ends extend backward. Four more hackles are tied on the other side of the fly. The hackles are topped with a few turns of soft hackle at the eye to give girth and roundness to that end.

Joe's "prototype" Pennsylvania tandems were of grayish-blue dun hackle, either hen or the softer feathers from a rooster neck, to look like river minnows. For a little minnow "flash," the bodies of the front and back hook can be wound with silver tinsel; gold will also work. The tail of the "fish" is a short length of bucktail tied at the rear of the second hook.

The question is always, how do you tie the two hooks together? In tying a tandem streamer fly, connect the flies before dressing them. Although supple, the connector material must be relatively heavy so that the fly keeps its shape and the hooks don't tangle each other when fished.

Whether using heavy monofilament, nylon-covered wire or fly line, the connector material is tied atop each hook's shank. Measure the material to the length of the tandem streamer fly you wish to create. Put what will become the back hook in the vise and wind tying thread along the shank length.

Place the connector line on top of the hook, the back end of the material at the back end of the shank, just before the bend. Tie tightly over its length. You may finish with a coating of head cement for extra hold. The rest of the connector line should extend forward, beyond the eye.

Take that hook out of the vise and clamp in what will be the front hook of the fly. Prepare the shank with tying thread, as before. Lay the forward end of the connector line on top of the hook and secure it to the shank, also as before. Leave a little bare shank behind the eye for tying on the side and collar hackles and forming the head. Some tiers like to position the hooks so that the front rides point-down while the trailing hook is point-up.

Once the hooks are tandem-tied, you can go back and dress each fly individually. The rear hook is usually dressed simply with wound tinsel and/or floss and very little tail, if any. The forward hook gets the bulk of the fly. You can dress the fly in whatever pattern, colors and material you choose. The tandem streamer is just a tying style.

As for me, I quickly "invented" a barred rock (black-and-white striped) tandem streamer and an all-black "leech" version. As a steelhead angler, I wanted something bright, so I used bright-orange and pink hackles with lots of glitter. Some tiers string beads on the monofilament connector between the flies, or they thread it through flashy piping.

One tandem streamer I bought last year in New England has marabou on the lead hook instead of saddle hackles; others are nearly all bucktail. Bucktail is especially used, along with a wire connector, for toothy fish such as northern pike and pickerel. Tandem streamers are also effective for bass and stripers.

The tandem streamer's light weight makes it ideal for fishing just below the surface, like a minnow on the feed in riffles. After dark, that's where the baitfish and the big trout moved in the Delaware River. And my laughing, fly-tying friend would be there to catch them.



A black leech pattern and a Blue Dun pattern.



Tandem streamers are useful for catching big fish on big flies.

The Massasaug

by Andrew L. Shiels

"Massasauga," "swamp rattler," and "black snapper," are a few of the nicknames given to a rare, secretive, yet interesting rattlesnake found in northwestern Pennsylvania. Its limited distribution and unique ecological needs have unfortunately placed this species among Pennsylvania's most endangered. Out of sight and out of mind to most Pennsylvanians, the massasauga has been quietly disappearing for years. However, recent conservation efforts have been undertaken to ensure its survival in the Commonwealth. Understanding its biology and ecology are keys to developing an effective conservation strategy.

The eastern massasauga (*Sistrurus catenatus catenatus*) is a medium-sized venomous snake that reaches lengths of 24 to 30 inches. It has a grayish body color with a series of dark-brown, irregularly shaped blotches along the top of the back. These blotches are the source of the Latin species name "catenatus," which means "chain-like." Along the sides of the body are two to three rows of smaller, more rounded spots.

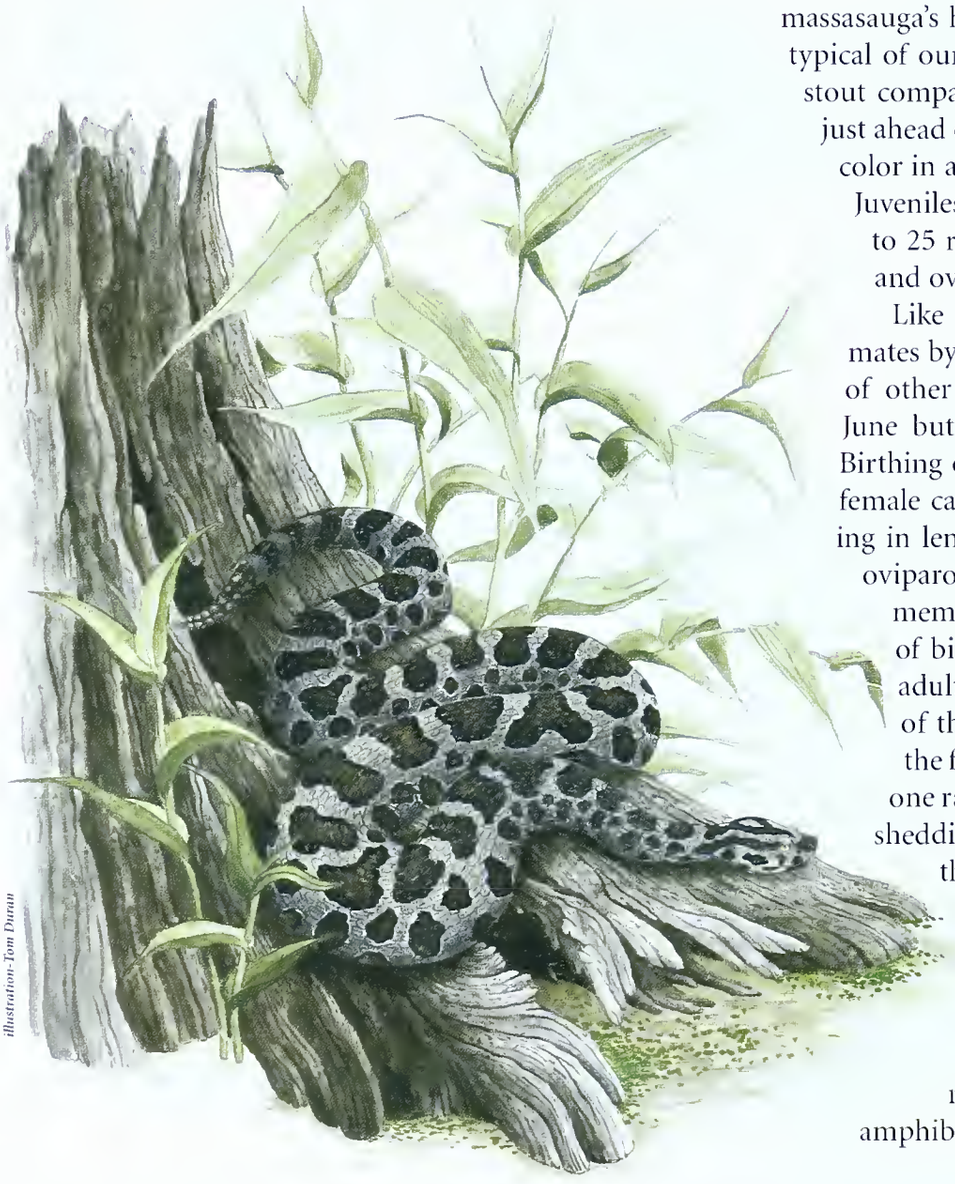


illustration-Tom Duran

Massasaugas are pit vipers, which means there is a heat-sensing pit on the side of the head between the eye and nostril. Like our other two venomous species, the northern copperhead and the eastern timber rattlesnake, massasaugas have vertically elliptical pupils and a single row of scales on the underside of the tail. Unlike timber rattlesnakes, which have many small scales on the head, a massasauga's head is covered with nine large, scale plates typical of our non-venomous species. The body is very stout compared to the length. The portion of the tail just ahead of the rattles is often a dirty yellow or cream color in adults, and the tail ends in a series of rattles. Juveniles usually display a yellow tail. There are 23 to 25 rows of keeled scales extending up the sides and over the back, and it has a single anal plate.

Like other snakes, male massasaugas find their mates by searching for and following the scent trails of other massasaugas. Mating peaks in May and June but can occur throughout the warm season. Birthing occurs in late August and September, and a female can produce a litter of up to 20 snakes ranging in length from 7 to 10 inches. Massasaugas are oviparous, giving birth to live young encased in a membrane. The young are venomous at the time of birth. They resemble smaller versions of the adult with a single horny projection at the base of the tail referred to as a birth button. This is the first rattle segment, which will move outward one rattle segment at a time with each subsequent shedding of the skin. When startled or agitated, their rattling is quiet and reminiscent of the sound produced by a leaking tire, frying bacon or an aerated kitchen faucet. Not normally aggressive, they are content to remain quiet as potential predators pass by. Massasaugas primarily prey on small mammals, but they have been known to eat amphibians, birds and occasionally small snakes.

a Rattlesnake

Massasaugas occur from southern Ontario, through western New York, western Pennsylvania, and portions of Ohio into Michigan and through the upper midwestern states from Minnesota down to Missouri. Massasaugas aren't widespread in Pennsylvania and live only in certain areas of northwest Pennsylvania. They're strongly associated with relict prairie habitat in Crawford, Mercer, Butler and Venango counties. Relict prairie is the natural prairie habitat that remains, which hasn't previously been converted to agriculture or development. Pennsylvania is on the extreme eastern end of this habitat type, which is much more common in midwestern states.

Massasaugas are habitat specialists. They require swamps and bottomland wetlands near upland meadows, old-field or grassland habitats. The wetlands are needed for over-wintering. To avoid death from freezing, massasaugas descend under ground through small mammal or crayfish burrows to reach the water table where they spend the winter, often partially submerged. Thus, their health and survival depends on the presence of other organisms such as crayfish. Upland habitats are used for basking and foraging. Massasaugas travel back and forth between these habitat types depending on the season. Unless both habitats are present, massasaugas can't survive. When roads separate these habitats, mortalities often occur.

Sites in Pennsylvania where this species is still present are few. Search efforts in recent years have attempted to confirm whether they remain in historic locations and the extent of their range today. A study conducted from 2002 through 2005 in cooperation with researchers from the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy revealed that there are four relatively healthy metapopulations where snake numbers are large enough to provide hope for their continued survival. A number of smaller, less populated sites exist where the initial prognosis isn't as good and additional survey work is needed. From 2005 to 2007, a radio tracking study has been underway to better understand how much this species moves on a daily, seasonal and annual basis. Such information is critically needed to better understand the size of a massasauga's home range, the specific habitats they use and how they move within those habitats.

These recent studies and survey work conducted by Commission staff and others over the years have resulted in a recognition that we must find ways to protect and conserve the remaining properties where massasaugas exist. Currently, the Commission and its conservation partners are prioritizing properties for conservation easements or purchase. Some properties are already under public or private ownership that will allow habitat improvement and restoration efforts to occur. For example, as an old field or idled farm pasture matures and becomes filled with trees and shade, it's less able to meet the sun basking needs of a massasauga. Removal or thinning of trees and burning of the grasses and shrubs can set the succession process back by several years and create habitat more suitable to this little rattlesnake.

The eastern massasauga, a Pennsylvania endangered species, is rare throughout its range in the U.S. and is on the endangered, threatened or rare list in each state where it's found. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife is reviewing this species for federal Endangered Species Act listing because of its declining populations range-wide. In recognition of its extreme rarity and to ensure that research and habitat work are properly coordinated, biologists in the Commission's Natural Diversity Section are working on a long-term management plan for the massasauga. To maintain a viable population of massasaugas in Pennsylvania, active research, site protection and habitat management projects will be needed in the years ahead. The massasauga is a vital part of the Commonwealth's natural history, which we cannot afford to let quietly pass.

State Wildlife Grants

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission administers the State Wildlife Grants (SWG) Program funds from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for the protection of our trust species including fish, amphibians, reptiles and mussels. This program is designed for the protection of rare or declining animals and their habitats. This program benefits all Pennsylvanians because these animals are frequently valuable indicators of environmental conditions and important components of our quality of life. For more information on SWG, visit the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**, and enter this address into your browser: **www.fish.state.pa.us/promo/grants/swg/00swg.htm**. Pennsylvania currently lists 15 amphibians and 22 reptiles in the State Wildlife Action Plan as "species of greatest conservation need." The eastern massasauga rattlesnake is one of these reptiles.

STEELHEAD THROUGH the Winter

by Mike Bleech
photo by the author

Winter it was, but the ground was bare. In fact, it was downright nice. There hadn't been any snow lately, so the water was low and clear and the steelhead had been pounded hard. Probably most that remained in the creek had felt a hook. They were dark, skittish and not at all aggressive. But still, it was a great day to be outdoors along a steelhead creek. Just seeing a few fish made it interesting, but also frustrating.

I tried every fly in my vest. Of course, the only fly that worked was the last one I tried, a red single-egg pattern with a wisp of dirty white yarn. On the first drift with this fly one of four steelhead lying on the downstream side of a break in the shale bottom rose just slightly and inhaled it. If you really love steelhead fishing, that's enough to make a good day.

The tiny hook found a soft spot in the jaw and the battle was on. Steelhead don't have the same explosiveness in cold winter water as they do during fall when the run begins. Still, they're fabulous fish. This is how great they are. This fish even jumped twice, not such a common thing in midwinter. The day was getting better.

Four more steelhead took the fly, three of which I was able to get my hands on. I usually don't carry a net for winter steelhead fishing—no sense stressing the fish any more than necessary.

Had it really been the fly pattern or did the steelhead just become active for a while?

I was the only one of our group of four to get any action during that time, so my guess was a combination of both the right fly and the right time. Steelhead can be mighty finicky during winter.

The previous outing it had been one of my fishing pals who got all of the action on skein he had collected a couple of months earlier. A couple of weeks later everyone caught steelhead on nightcrawlers—everyone but me because I insisted on flies or nothing. Stubbornness is a very bad idea when fishing for steelhead during winter.

Versatility and many options are the way to go. Winter steelhead fishing conditions are highly variable and to be successful with any degree of consistency you should be prepared to match whatever conditions you encounter.

Sometimes in the dead of winter streams are practically unfishable—locked in ice or flowing thick with slush. These are dreary times for devoted steelheaders and severe cases of cabin fever set in.

Warm spells raise and muddy stream flows if there has been much snow on the ground. If streams do not rise too quickly fishing can be fabulous just as the water levels are rising and the water is starting to get a little bit of color. But then while streams are blown out with heavy flows there is no opportunity for fishing. Later as streams recede fishing is generally good. Fresh steelhead may have entered the creeks.

Some winters, like the most recent, are relatively mild and steelhead fishing is possible through most of the winter. This is a mixed blessing. Unless there is rain, creeks will be low and clear. This makes steelhead very wary. Nonetheless, with long periods of fishable stream conditions many steelhead are harvested. Although a good number of the more serious steelhead anglers practice catch and release, many anglers take their fish home, resulting in dwindling numbers left in the creeks, and those that remain become increasingly wary.

Check the Internet for fishing hotlines, reliable fishing hotlines ignoring any which seem to always say that fishing is good, or establish local contacts so you can phone for detailed information before heading to the steelhead creeks. The most important information is stream flow conditions, not how many steelhead are being caught because the attitude of the fish might change at any time.

The general guideline for steelhead fishing tactics particularly during winter is as the water gets lower and clearer use smaller baits or lures; use finer line; use stealthier tactics.

Several baits will catch steelhead. Eggs, usually either steelhead eggs or salmon eggs, are used most commonly. These are used in three basic forms, as single eggs, as skein, or tied in sacks. Clearer water calls for smaller egg sacks, smaller pieces of skein, or single eggs. Whether one form of eggs has an advantage is questionable in general, but in specific situations there are apparent indications that steelhead seem to prefer one over others. Avoid drawing too many conclusions that might lead to stubbornness.

On one memorable winter outing I was using egg sacks without success until I spotted a piece of egg skein laying on the bottom of a pool. After retrieving the skein I cut a piece and drifted it through some of the same water I had been fishing with sacks. Immediately my luck changed. Until that skein was gone I caught several steelhead. When I went back to the sacks, the action stopped immediately.

Sacks might provide an advantage sometimes because color can be added either by using various colors of sack material or by adding colored artificial eggs to the sacks. Color can be a very important factor.

Shiners are often excellent bait during winter with live shiners seemingly having the advantage over salted shiners. Of course, carrying live minnows is difficult if you do much walking. Nightcrawlers are often effective bait as are various types of grubs and artificial baits.

Odors, more commonly though incorrectly called scents, can be extremely important. Steelhead have an acute sense of smell. In muddy water particularly this can make all of the difference between success and failure.

The same principles can be applied to fly fishing.

Fly fishing enthusiast J.T. Davis suggests, "When the water is clear and cold I'm fishing smaller flies, small egg patterns, small bead-head nymphs down to size 18 on heavy hooks.

"Typical size 18 hooks are not strong enough to handle heavy fish. You can't use light-wire hooks on these things or they'll just straighten out and I've had this happen to me. They make them in various styles, but I use caddis-style hooks."

Davis prefers the sucker spawn style of egg flies but points out that this is just personal preference. He carries numerous different colors. One of his favorites for clear water is the Pink Lady. Pink is often effective in very clear water. A couple of his favorite bead-head fly patterns are the Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ear and the Pheasant Tail.

"My attitude about egg patterns is it's the color of the day. You never know what they're going to take. A lot of the time I fish two in tandem. If I'm fishing with other guys, everybody's got a different color on."

Like many fly fishers, Davis uses fairly heavy tippets.

"We don't want to play a fish until it dies," he stresses. "The other thing is, I use fluorocarbon tippets sometimes down to 4X, but usually 3X."

Steelhead anglers often concentrate too much on sight fishing, fishing for the steelhead that they can clearly see in the calmer parts of pools. Tempting though this is, it can be counterproductive. Those fish you see so clearly can also see you. Steelhead that can not be seen might be more willing strikers.

"I like to fish riffles when the water is clear," Davis suggests. "I like to fish a riffle going into a pool. I like to fish what we call a trough. I like to fish water that has some chop. The chop helps hide you. The fish can't see so well as they can through still water."

Swirling, rippling water helps to hide the line or leader.

Muddied water calls for going the opposite direction with leaders, fly sizes and colors.

"When the water's off-color and its ugly, my tippets are 2X and I'm fishing really big things, size 12. I'm fishing chartreuse for the primary color."

Bright red is even more visible in muddy water. Black can be another good choice. Wooly Buggers are favorite flies under these conditions.

"When the water is off-color and up, I do a lot more fishing with indicators than when the water is clear," Davis says. "You can use an indicator and not worry about spooking the fish."

Bobbers can also be used for bait fishing.

"I try to fish the tails of the pools. I'll swing Wooly Buggers."

Generalizations are similar for both steelhead fly fishing and bait fishing.

Pennsylvania steelhead fishing is among the best to be found in North America. It has helped to make winter more exciting than ever. Come on up and join the party.



Winter steelhead fishing conditions are highly variable and to be successful with any degree of consistency you should be prepared to match whatever conditions you encounter.

The Best Big Bass Bite

by Darl Black
photos by the author

Years ago, when I first caught a 6-pound largemouth bass in November, I was pleasantly surprised. I chalked it up as a fluke that such a fine largemouth was taken so late in the season. Then the following year, around the same time, I enjoyed several incredible days of catching oversized largemouths, including one that weighed almost 7 pounds. It happened the next year and the year after—all during the same four- to six-week period.

The average angler would most likely pick spring, summer or early fall as the best time to fish for largemouth bass, largely because of the "pleasant weather" factor. Furthermore, statistics from the Commission Angler Award Program show that the lion's share of big largemouth bass entries come during the warmer months. But it's during the spring-through-early-fall period when the greatest numbers of anglers are on the water. More fishing lines out certainly create the opportunity for a greater total number of bass to be caught, thereby increasing the odds that big bass will be taken. However, that doesn't mean that your odds of catching big bass are necessarily better.



"Nowadays I catch more big bass from the end of October to early December than during any other time."

When you talk to professional bass anglers across the country who fish for a living, they give a nod to water temperatures falling through the 50s into the high 40s as one of the best times for catching numbers of above average-sized bass. My Pennsylvania bass fishing experiences certainly support that. Nowadays I catch more big bass from the end of October to early December than during any other time.

Why late fall

Bass are cold-blooded animals. Their metabolism rises and falls with the water temperature; therefore, they require food more often in warm water temperatures than in cold temperatures. So if they eat more when the water temperature is 75 degrees, why do they chow-down when the water temperature is falling into the 40s?

It's a combination of what we might call "opportunism" and "last chance" syndromes. First, baitfish are concentrated in key areas during the late fall, creating an optimum feeding situation.

Second, by mid-autumn, bass instinctively recognize that even colder temperatures are approaching, which may lead to periods of near dormancy, so they take in as much food as possible to help sustain them during less active times ahead. In particular, female largemouths (the larger ones of the species) carry developing eggs over the winter for the spring spawn, so they require even more nutrition.

Largemouth bass are an adaptable species. In any lake, bass spread out in a variety of different cover and depths during the summer to feed on an array of forage. Depending on specific situations, some largemouths may focus on pelagic baitfish like shad in open water, while others patrol the shallows for small sunfish, golden shiners and frogs. Another segment of the bass population may turn their attention to crayfish, insects or other food sources.

Because there are so many options in the summer, you could be on the right lake at the right time but completely miss a feeding frenzy that is happening when bass are keying on a particular prey that eluded your observation.

When water temperatures start to cool, certain prey options are gradually eliminated. Baitfish species move to the forefront on the largemouth's diet.

In the fall, baitfish schools initially move shallow, but eventually they drop back to deeper water when temperatures dip below 50 degrees. Bass, which had been scattered over wide areas, now take advantage of the concentrated prey. First, largemouth hammer baitfish in relatively shallow water, and then the bass follow the prey as it retreats to slightly deeper water, with larger bass feeding heartily until temperatures approach the mid-40s to low 40s.



By mid-autumn, bass instinctively recognize that even colder temperatures are approaching, which may lead to periods of near dormancy, so they take in as much food as possible to help sustain them during less active times ahead.

During October as the water cools, baitfish from the offshore waters of an impoundment move onto the shoreline flats not far from the main creek channel. At the same time, the shallowest vegetation begins to die, forcing bass that spent the summer in the skinny water of weed-choked bays onto the flats as well.

The end of October and first part of November can be exciting fishing on the 6- to 10-foot shoreline flats with deeper water nearby. This usually takes place in the upper third of an impoundment. As the water temperature drops below 50 degrees, bait and bass push deeper to the break line of the channel lip in 8 to 15 feet. This "channel edge bite" is generally in full swing during the latter part of November and may continue into December.

Another example is a natural lake. One that particularly comes to mind is Presque Isle Bay, which functions as a lake unto itself, even though it's connected to Lake Erie. Here end-of-summer largemouth fishing is fairly strong with bass found in a wide range of depths and habitats. Then suddenly the bite goes sour. Many fishermen figure it's time to hang up the bass rod, but the bite will pick up several weeks later.



Without question, one of the best big bass baits of all time is a skirted weedguard jig with trailer.

The best spots in early November are the outside perimeter of the massive weed flats where shallower fingers extend closest to deeper water. In the Presque Isle example, emerald shiner schools are returning to the bay from Lake Erie and bass are there to greet them, or rather, ambush them.

As fall progresses on most inland natural lakes (such as Conneaut Lake) the deepest weed edge becomes the pivotal contact point for the majority of largemouths as shallower weeds die out. Anglers who stay with the deepest green weeds will catch bass into December.

However, Presque Isle largemouths behave differently. If the weather remains stable (that is, no early winter storms), these bass move shallower in late November and into early December, apparently following emerald shiners. Bass will group up in "pothole" pockets of slightly deeper water on a weed flat. Sometimes on sunny days bass will be discovered on sun-drenched sand in only a few feet of water.

Fire away

With water temperatures falling through the 50s, a baitfish-imitating crankbait is my first choice on both reservoirs and natural lakes. A moderate to slow retrieve usually draws strikes from bigger bass. At this time of year, I favor crankbaits made of cedar because of their slow rise during pauses in the retrieve. However, plastic and balsa baits will also produce. I prefer shad, bone, faded chartreuse or mustard colors.

You'll need crankbaits with different dive-to depth ratings. One crankbait should work in the 4- to 6-foot range, another one for 6 to 10 feet, and a final one to get down into 10 to 14 feet. Keep in mind that the manufacturer's depth rating for a crankbait is rarely achieved. In other words, the package may say "dives 10 to 14 feet," but 10 feet may actually be as deep as you can put it.

In reservoirs, crankbaits with different running depths let you strain the water on the flats all the way to the creek channel. This strategy is critical as bass filter from the shallow parts of the flats to the deeper channel break line.

For casting over the submerged weedbeds of natural lakes, add a special shallow-lip crankbait to the arsenal. The term for this special crank is "wake bait" because it runs so shallow that it leaves a wake on the surface. If you don't have one of these, a shallow swimbait or even a spinnerbait can be used as a substitute. On natural lakes, first cast over weedbeds with the shallow-running bait, and then along the deep weed edges with a deeper-diving crankbait.

Without question, one of the best big bass baits of all time is a skirted weedguard jig with trailer. It can be crawled over almost any bottom cover in a reservoir with minimal chance of snagging. Popping a jig off a deep stump is almost guaranteeing a strike.

On natural lakes the jig-n-chunk can be pitched to the outside edge of deep weed lines, allowed to touch down and then swim slowly along the bottom. Yes, swim the jig instead of hopping it.

Fish a jig-n-chunk on days when bass don't seem to be chasing slowly retrieved crankbaits. And then give jigs priority once the water temperature descends into the high 40s.

As the water continues to cool, bass are going to lose interest in moving baits. The final encore is deadsticking suspended baits, either a suspending jerkbait or a small shad-shaped suspending crankbait (perhaps with added lead foil stripes) will do the trick.

Crank the bait down to its maximum depth and pause it. Let it rest for at least 15 seconds (or longer if you have the patience) before giving it a nudge with the rod tip. Pause again, and wait another 15 seconds. If you see the line twitch or feel the least bit of resistance, set the hook by sweeping the rod to either side.

As you wiggle your toes and rub your fingers to shed the November chill, keep repeating this: *Big bass bite best in cold water!*

Pymatuning State Park



by Valerie Pettigrew Tarkowski

photo courtesy of DCNR

What's so big about Pymatuning State Park? Everything! With 21,122 acres, Pymatuning State Park is the biggest state park in Pennsylvania. Add to that the 17,088-acre lake and you have the biggest lake in the Commonwealth as well. Because of those two big things, it's one of the top two state parks with the largest attendance—3.2 to 3.5 million visitors every year.

It is a shallow lake, 10 feet deep on average with 30 feet at its deepest. The shallowest parts are in the north end of the lake with the south end having the deeper sections. It shares shoreline and water with the state of Ohio.

Because the lake straddles Pennsylvania and Ohio, when fishing from a boat, either license is acceptable no matter which state you are in on the water. However, when fishing from shore you must possess the fishing license for the state whose shore you are fishing on. You can purchase your fishing license at the Linesville State Fish Hatchery visitor center or at one of the other fishing license agents in the area. Check the Fish & Boat Commission web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**, for a list of agents. With over 70 miles of shoreline to fish, Pymatuning State Park has a spot for everyone.

Pymatuning Lake is a warmwater lake with plentiful walleyes, muskellunge, crappies and bass. More than 50 fishing tournaments are held on the lake each year. Over the past several years the park has made good use of the Fish & Boat Commission Adopt-a-Lake program with the help of the Pymatuning Lake Association, other volunteers, and the Ohio Division of Wildlife. Each year habitat structure is placed in the lake to give fry, young-of-the-year fish, and other small fish places to feed and hide. This year 100 porcupine cribs were placed in two areas on the lake along with a rubble reef.

(article continued on page 52)

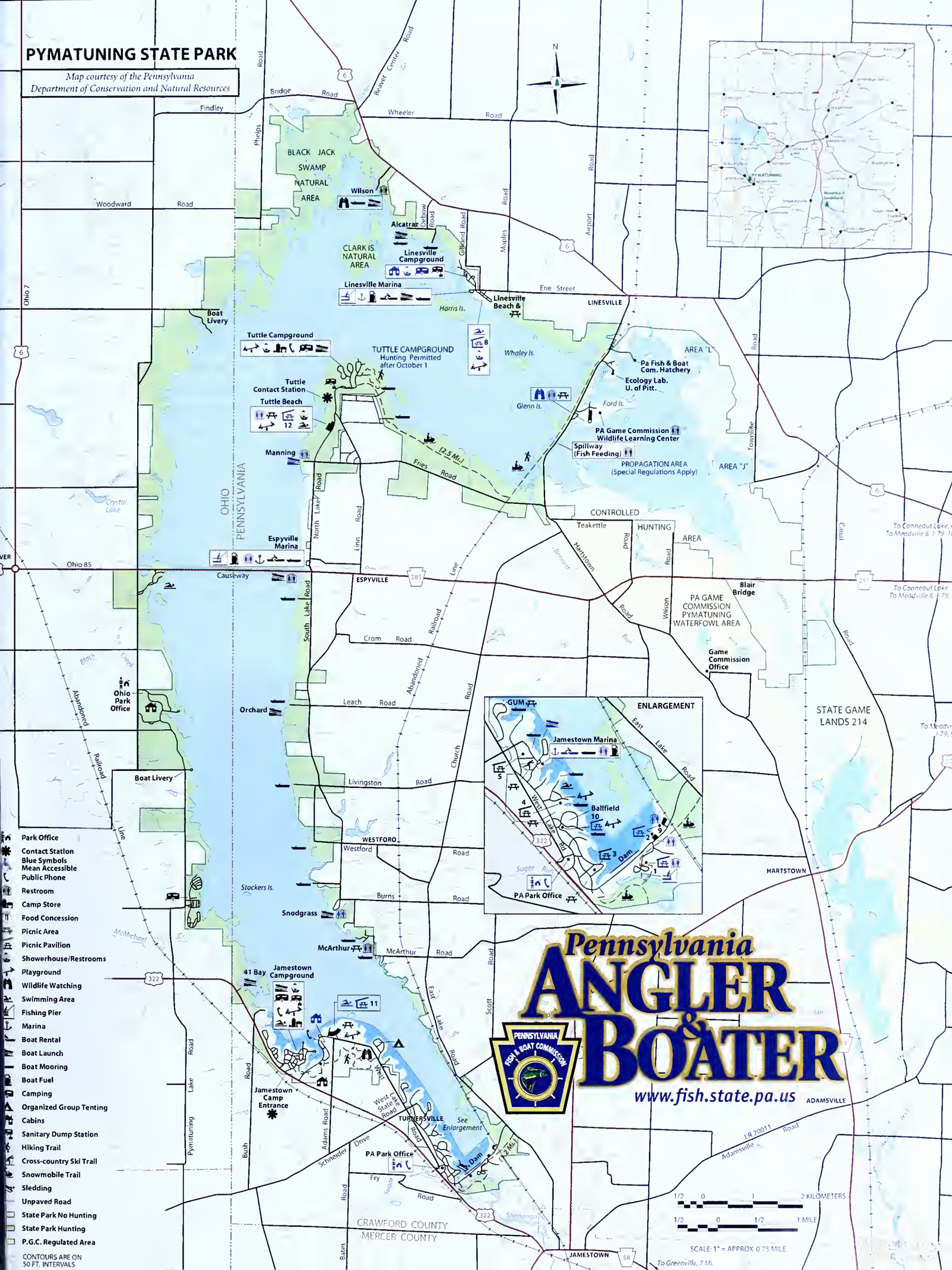


Pymatuning Lake is a warmwater lake with plentiful walleyes, muskellunge, crappies and bass.

photo: Art Michaels

PYMATUNING STATE PARK

Map courtesy of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources



Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER

www.fish.state.pa.us



photo courtesy of DCNR

With over 70 miles of shoreline to fish, Pymatuning State Park has a spot for everyone.

A combined effort by the Fish & Boat Commission and Ohio Department of Wildlife resulted in over 16 million walleye fry stocked in the lake during 2007. The lake also received an additional stocking of 78,699 advance walleye fry. Pymatuning is scheduled to receive a stocking of 5,000 muskellunge fingerlings later in the year.

There are more than 40 boat mooring areas throughout the lake. Many spots have waiting lists, though, so check with the park if you are interested in a mooring site. In addition to those areas there are 11 boat launches and three marinas with boat rentals.

Motorboats must display a registration from any state. Non-powered boats must display one of the following: Registration from any state, launch or mooring permit from Pennsylvania State Parks, or a launch permit from the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission.

Boaters are limited to motors with a 10 horsepower maximum. This makes the lake a great place for visitors who enjoy kayaking and canoeing along its 70 shoreline miles. The many islands and beautiful backwater areas, like Black Jack Swamp, are great for paddlers who love to explore. There's always something new to see.

The Linesville State Fish Hatchery visitor center is on the north end of the park near Linesville on Hartstown Road. Be sure to stop by and see the native fish in the 10,000-gallon viewing tank. Visitors can go downstairs to a platform in the hatch house where the walleyes, muskies, catfish, steelhead and many other fish species are raised for stocking. There are also small habitat centers upstairs with frogs and toads living in them, state-record fish mounts and replicas on the walls, and so much more. Walk the grounds, read the interpretation signs and enjoy the sanctuary area. It encompasses 2,500 acres of land and water that are closed to all recreational activities. Hatchery visitor center hours are 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. The visitor center is open every day year-round.

Just down the road from the hatchery is the PA Game Commission's wildlife learning center with information on anything with fur or feathers.

Farther down Hartstown Road, heading south toward Jamestown, is the famous spillway "where the ducks walk on the fish." The spillway underwent major renovations last year and was closed for those upgrades. After the $3 million improvements were complete, it reopened in May 2007.

For more information contact:
Pymatuning State Park
2660 Williamsfield Road
Jamestown, PA 16134
phone 724-932-3142
(fax) 724-932-3724
web: **www.visitPAparks.com**
email: pymatuningsp@state.pa.us



photo-Art Michaels

Pymatuning's 17,088 acres offer great warmwater fishing. There are also 11 boat accesses and three marinas.

WORLD YOUTH FLY FISHING CHAMPIONSHIP COMES ★ TO PA

by Mark A. Nale
photos by the author

The limestone water of Clinton County's Fishing Creek gurgled as it flowed over time-worn rocks. Reedsville angler and Penn State University student Adam Picketts cast his trio of flies with high expectations. Although the water was cool, Picketts felt the "heat" from the pressure shouldered by someone who was expected to do well in the tournament. This was the fifth and final session of the Youth World Fly Fishing Championships and Picketts was ranked fifth, the highest-ranked U.S. angler.

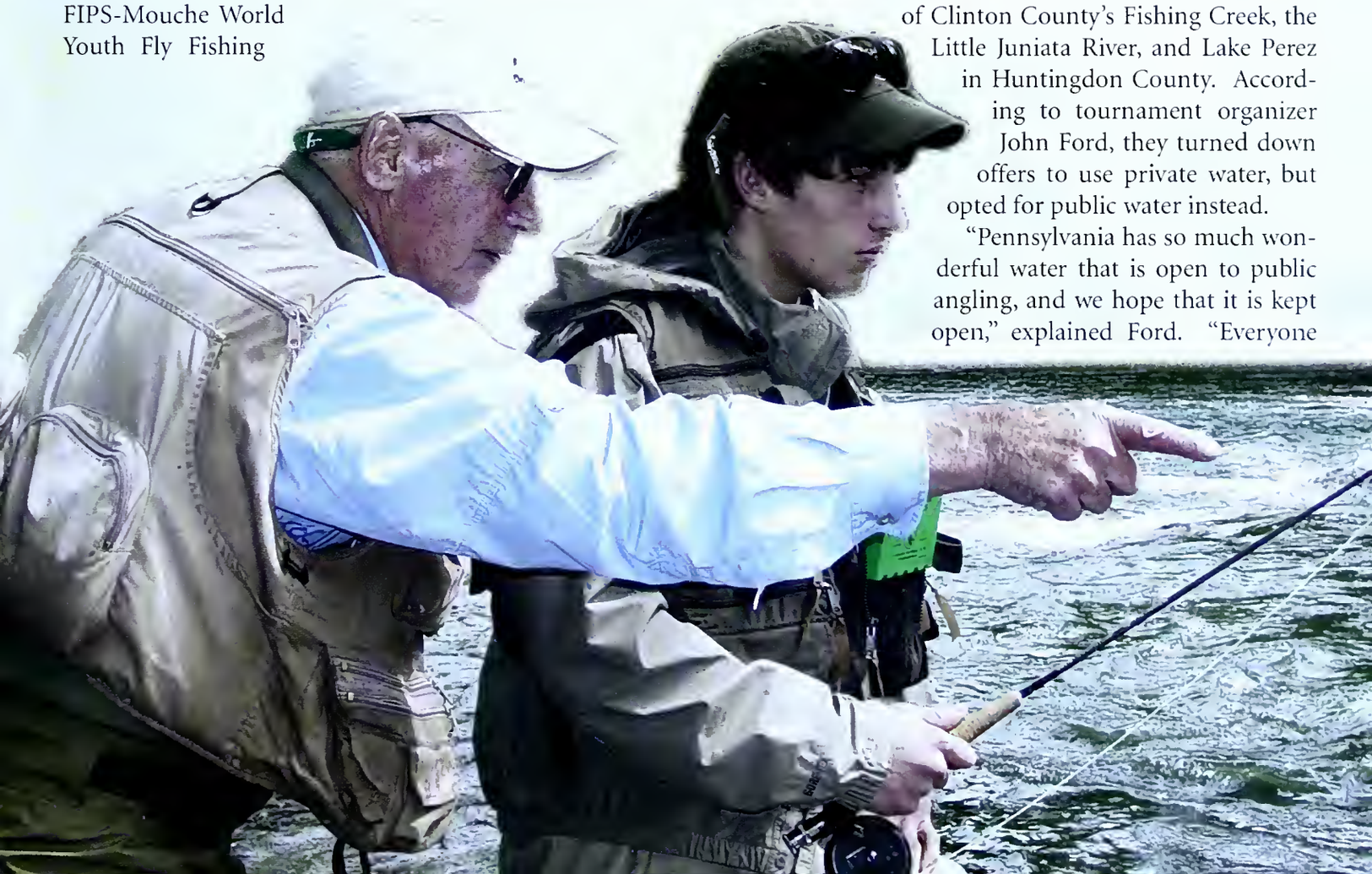
Luck was not with Picketts that evening. He made some 1,260 casts to land three undersized wild brown trout and one 232 mm fish. French angler Bastian Femenia, on a neighboring beat, landed six scoring trout and took first place on that venue.

This drama was a part of the sixth annual international FIPS-Mouche World Youth Fly Fishing Championship, the equivalent of the fly-fishing Olympics. "FIPS-Mouche" is the Fédération Internationale de Pêche Sportive Mouche (International Federation of Sport Fly Fishing). The competition occurred in central Pennsylvania, last August 6-8. It was the first time that this international event had been held in the United States, and it provided a totally new experience for most Keystone State anglers who watched the event.

"It is a great thing for Pennsylvania to be hosting this event," said well-known fly fisherman and author Joe Humphreys, who served as co-chairman for the event. "Our trout streams are hard-fished and challenging, but they are some of the best streams in the world."

Pennsylvania waters selected for the tournament included two sections of Centre County's Spring Creek, a section of Clinton County's Fishing Creek, the Little Juniata River, and Lake Perez in Huntingdon County. According to tournament organizer John Ford, they turned down offers to use private water, but opted for public water instead.

"Pennsylvania has so much wonderful water that is open to public angling, and we hope that it is kept open," explained Ford. "Everyone



involved with the tournament preferred that we use public water, and many participants from other countries were amazed that the championship waters were all open to the public."

Over 50 youth fly anglers from the far corners of the United States, Canada and seven European countries participated in the tournament. Teams represented Canada, the Czech Republic, England, France, Ireland, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain. The United States fielded two teams: Team 1, made up of veteran competition anglers, and team 2, mostly composed of Pennsylvania anglers who do not compete. Each team could field five fishing members plus alternates.

Competition structure

Since most Pennsylvania anglers are unfamiliar with world competition, United States representative to FIPS-Mouche International Walter Ungerman offered a brief explanation about the competition's structure. According to Ungerman, the 50 anglers were divided by a lottery into five groups of 10 anglers—one from each of the 10 five-person teams. This grouping occurred just before the competition began. The 10-angler groups fish different water during each of the five 3-hour sessions. Scoring is based on the fish caught, and this is used to rank each youth angler within his or her group of 10.

With the exception of the lake, anglers are assigned a "beat" at each venue, consisting of at least 175 stream meters with a 10-meter buffer zone at each end. Anglers were not permitted to move or cast into adjacent beats. A judge, called a controller, monitored each beat and noted any possible rule infractions on a score sheet. All fish caught were carefully released.

Points were awarded for the number and length of trout. Trout shorter than 200 mm (about 8 inches) did not count toward scoring. The setup was slightly different for the warmwater species caught on Lake Perez. Anglers there were assigned two per rowboat, with the controller manning the oars.

Scores were totaled at the end of each session and the anglers were ranked. The angler with the highest score was assigned one point, the second-highest angler earned two points and so forth, depending on the angler's rank in the group. All anglers catching zero trout were given 10 points.

A perfect score for the three-day competition (five three-hour sessions) would be five points, which could be earned by ranking first place in each of the five sessions. The best score in last year's competition was six points



(four first-place finishes and one second place), earned by French angler Nicolas Siry. The best individual score this year was 11 points (two 3rds, two 2nds and a 1st), earned by Frederic Letexier of France.

Team scores were determined by adding all of the individual rankings of each team's members during each session. Many times a single fish or even a single centimeter of length separated rankings.

Rules

All controllers underwent training to learn the contest rules and procedures. The rules are specific and detailed, including those pertaining to flies and how they are rigged. Anglers were allowed to use a maximum of three flies. All flies had to be barbless and no external weight was permitted, except for small beadhead flies. Floating strike indicators were not legal.

Controllers, armed with a measuring tray, pen, score sheet and clipboard, stayed with their anglers during each three-hour session. Anglers brought their fish to the controller to be unhooked, measured, recorded and released.

Unless you were there to witness the event, it is difficult to imagine the level of angling skills attained by these youth anglers. Arkansas fishing guide and coach of USA-1, John Wilson, commented, "Most of these kids are better than the adults who I know."

There is also an intense pressure during the competition.

During the first session, I watched as Vit Pavlacky of the Czech Republic fished his beat on upper Spring Creek. He worked slowly but methodically up his allotted 175 meters of stream, catching seven scoring trout and several smaller fish.

When he reached the upper end of his beat, he scrambled up the bank and took off like a jackrabbit, running the entire length of his beat to finish the final 30 minutes by starting again at the bottom of his section. Sprinting 175 meters is no small feat while wearing chest waders and suffering in the hot, humid air. The dash paid off—he caught one more trout, to total eight. Pavlacky finished first and earned the coveted single point.

The low water on Fishing Creek proved to be the toughest venue, but overall the anglers did well, even on Fishing Creek. Over 1,000 measurable fish were caught by the 50 youth anglers. This number is many more than were caught at either of the past two World Youth Fly Fishing Championships, which were held in Portugal and the Czech Republic. According to Ford, the anglers and coaches were amazed that the number of trout caught did not taper off as the contest progressed.

"This competition was a true showcase, in much the same way as the BassMaster Classic highlighted the fisheries resources of western Pennsylvania to a global audience," commented Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Executive Director Dr. Doug Austen. "The FIPS-Mouche World Youth Fly Fishing Championships gave the international angling community a sense of the tremendous opportunities in central Pennsylvania."

A tremendous effort was necessary to organize and produce this event. The bulk of this work was shouldered by retired State College teacher John Ford. Ford was quick to point out that it took the efforts of many to make this event a success.

"We depended on the work of over 145 volunteers to staff the event, and the special skills of many," said Ford. "Laurel Anders, the Fish & Boat Commission's North-central Region aquatic resources program specialist, did a marvelous job as liaison between the tournament and the Commission in Harrisburg. Whatever we needed, she took care of it."

Loren Williams, an adult circuit fly angler and coach of USA-2, shared the following observations.

"I was proud that the general public warmed to the event and made the kids feel welcome. I was proud that the local sport shops embraced the opportunity to show American hospitality and permit a fair exchange of knowledge," Williams said.

Co-chairman Ford added, "The public was accepting of the championship. I think that it is important to note that not a single fish was killed during the contest." That went a long way to alleviate peoples' fears about potential damage to the resource.

Williams further noted, "I know that there is controversy surrounding competitive fly-fishing. Hopefully, witnessing the event has permitted opinions based on knowledge and not ignorance. I do hope that the area entertains and wins a bid for having the adult World Fly Fishing Championships in the near future."

According to Ford, all coaches and anglers were extremely pleased by the fishing that central Pennsylvania provided for the tournament.

A bid is being made for central Pennsylvania to host the 2011 World Adult Championships. Ungerman was happy with what he saw and said that he would recommend that the adult championships be brought to Pennsylvania.

Dr. Austen summed it up well. "I think that the tournament should be a reminder to Pennsylvania anglers just how blessed we are in terms of the quality and diversity of the streams and lakes we have to pursue our sport. Here you have some of the most elite young anglers and adult coaches from around the world saying the waters they fished for this event rank among the most productive, scenic, beautiful waters they've ever had the opportunity to fish. The waters the competitors fished were publicly owned or publicly accessible. That's pretty exciting stuff when you stop to think about it. You and I can catch the same fish on the same waters on which an international organization chose to host its premier event."

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A new class of 16 deputy waterways conservation officers (DWCOs) graduated from training on September 10, 2007. Graduates included George Afionis, Mark Beer, Matthew Bruno, Jeffrey DeFosse, Ronald Figurella, Dana Hackett, Michael Hofecker, Edward Hoffman Jr., Wesley Osborne, Andrew Panessa, David Roberts, Timothy Rolison, Mark Rosler, David Talaba, Spencer Zimmerman, and Keith Zygowski. Currently, 191 active deputy DWCOs serve statewide. Anyone interested in learning more about DWCO positions should contact his or her nearest Commission regional headquarters. These headquarters are listed on the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us, and on page 42 of the* 2007 **Pennsylvania Fishing Summary.

ANGLER ARCHIVES



This heartrending sketch appeared on the cover of the December 1943 *Pennsylvania Angler.* The gift tag on the rod case reads "To Our Boy." Note the large "V" in the sketch's background. In World War II, the "V" symbol meant "victory," and it appeared nearly everywhere. We've all seen the footage of Winston Churchill flashing the "V" to reporters in London during World War II. And Beethoven's Fifth Symphony became popular then because the rhythmic motif of the first movement's main theme is "*dot-dot-dot-dash*," Morse code for the letter "V."

During World War II, *Pennsylvania Angler* content occasionally showed uniformed anglers, and a few covers, like this one, suggested the war's effect on the home front. Today, communicating with those who serve around the world is much easier, faster and more direct than ever before. We routinely receive email, letters and photographs from active-duty personnel, most often showing us the kind of fishing they have discovered in other parts of the world (see this issue's "Cast & Caught"). *PA Angler & Boater* still supports those on the home front with this kind of information, and still provides those who serve with a very welcomed taste of home.

Heilman Dam Removed

American shad, herring and other migratory fish can now be reacquainted with 18 miles of their historic habitat in the Lehigh River Watershed. The Heilman Dam was removed last August, and its removal will let these fish travel from the Atlantic Ocean to the headwaters of Mahoning Creek in Carbon and Schuylkill counties, a journey of more than 250 miles.

The Heilman Dam, a 15-foot-high concrete structure owned by the borough of Lehighton, once provided water for steam-fired locomotives, but the dam no longer serves a purpose. The borough considers the deteriorated dam a public safety hazard and a liability, not worthy of investing taxpayer dollars to repair and maintain for the long term.

"It was a no-brainer, really. Removing the dam is the most logical decision for economic and public safety reasons. Plus, it restores Mahoning Creek to its natural state and allows us to create a safe riverside park for our community," said John Hanosek, Lehighton borough manager. "We're looking forward to seeing shad swimming past the park, and we thank our partners for helping make this happen," he added.

It's fitting that the borough should undertake this river restoration project. Home to the confluence of Mahoning Creek and the Lehigh River, Lehighton was named after the Lehigh, which is derived from the Native American word "Lechauweing," meaning "where there are forks in the river."

Banks of the restored stream channel will be planted with native grasses, various shrubs and tree seedlings. The project will allow about 3 acres of land to be used as a public riverside park. The borough's long-term plan is to improve access to the site and increase recreational use of Mahoning Creek. The creek is currently designated a coldwater fishery and portions are stocked with trout by the PA Fish & Boat Commission. Removal of the dam, and resulting water quality improvements, will increase the creek length that is available habitat for trout.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for the people of Lehighton. Not only will they soon experience the joy of a free-flowing and healthier Mahoning Creek. The park will also reconnect the community to their home waters, and the local economy may see benefits from increased river-based recreation," said Rebecca Wodder, president of American Rivers, a national organization providing project funding.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Community-based Restoration Program (CRP) provided technical and financial assistance for the river restoration project. "This project shows our commitment to citizen-driven restoration initiatives, and we are proud to have joined our federal and local partners on such a successful restoration of habitat," said William T. Hogarth, director of NOAA Fisheries Service.

NOAA's CRP, a financial and technical assistance program with the NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation, promotes strong partnerships at the national, regional and local level to fund grassroots community-based restoration projects. Since its inception in 1996, CRP and its partners—including American Rivers and the FishAmerica Foundation—have funded more than 1,500 restoration projects nationally, including 350 in the Northeast.

PA Fish & Boat Commission Executive Director Doug Austen said, "The removal of outdated dams such as Heilman Dam is the proverbial win/win scenario. Returning a section of stream to its natural free-flowing course improves the habitat for both resident and migratory fish populations. It's also a win for those who like to recreate on and along the Mahoning Creek because a potential safety hazard is being eliminated."

"The removal of Heilman Dam is another great example of how partners can pull together to make a difference for our nation's fisheries," said Johanna Laderman, executive director of the FishAmerica Foundation. "We are excited for anglers to get out and experience the improved fishing on this newly opened river."

The Lehigh River and major tributaries such as Mahoning Creek once had significant runs of American shad and other migratory fishes, including alewife, blueback herring and American eel. The Delaware River Basin Commission considers the Lehigh River Watershed to be one of the three most important tributaries to the Delaware River for restoring the American shad. For more than 10 years, the PA Fish & Boat Commission and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service have stocked American shad fry in the Lehigh River, and they have supported habitat restoration efforts such as the removal of Heilman Dam.

The entire project is expected to cost $120,000. Financial and technical assistance for the project has been provided by American Rivers, FishAmerica Foundation, NOAA Fisheries, PA Department of Environmental Protection's Growing Greener Grant Program, PA Fish & Boat Commission, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

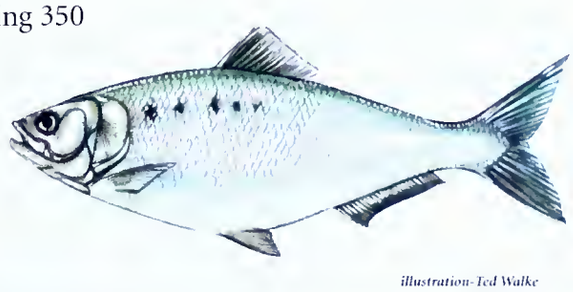


illustration-Ted Walke



photo-Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

Northern Indiana County's Little Mahoning Creek and its watershed are increasingly threatened by erosion and sediment pollution from poor agricultural practices and poorly maintained dirt and gravel roads. The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC) Freshwater Conservation Program is leading an effort to assess the waterway's health and undertake an extensive outreach and education program in the watershed's communities. The Fish & Boat Commission is cooperating in this project with a streambank stabilization project. For more details, visit WPC at www.paconserve.org, or visit the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.ns and search the site on "habitat management."

Fishin' from the Kitchen

Green Chili Walleyes

by Wayne Phillips

Try this perfect recipe, full of chili pepper flavor, for fall football fans or to make while at the lake.



photo-Wayne Phillips

Ingredients for four servings:

- ✔ Boneless, skinless walleyes for 4
- ✔ 1 to 1.5 cups green chili sauce
- ✔ Juice of 2 limes
- ✔ 2 Tbsp. Canola oil
- ✔ Salt and black pepper, to taste
- ✔ Tortilla chips

Procedure

Sauté walleye fillets over medium heat. When nearly cooked through, add green chili sauce, lime juice and salt and black pepper. Continue sautéing until fish is cooked through. Break up the fish into bite-sized pieces. Before the fish is completely cooked, add water or white wine if the sauce gets too thick.

Serve

Place walleyes in a shallow bowl. Put the bowl on a larger plate or platter. Surround the bowl with your favorite tortilla chips. You can make the chips crisper if you put them in a 350-degree oven for a few minutes.

Hints

You can use any mild white-fleshed fish for this recipe in addition to walleyes. If you want to make this dish "hot," add your favorite hot sauce to the dish just before you put it into the serving bowl. Multi-colored tortilla chips make for a more colorful dish.

Note that there are many different kinds of chili peppers available. Not all are hot. In fact, many are not hot at all. Mild chilies have a wonderful earthy flavor and terrific chili aroma. The green chili sauce in this recipe is packed with chili flavor, but hardly any chili heat. If you enjoy the taste of chili peppers, you have a world of different chilies to sample.

Fall Trout Stocking

The Fish & Boat Commission is stocking 89 streams with 47,100 adult trout in October. In addition, 58 lakes are being stocked with 62,400 adult trout. The fall stockings include two different components. Anglers who wish to harvest trout may take advantage of the stream sections and lakes regulated by the Extended Trout Season rules. The Extended Trout Season, which began September 4, lets anglers creel up to three trout of 7 inches or greater daily.

The second component is the stocking of 75 stream sections managed with special trout fishing regulations. A total of 54 stream sections stocked are part of the Delayed-Harvest, Artificial-Lures-Only program. Delayed-Harvest regulations allow for year-round fishing. However, no trout may be creeled the day after Labor Day until the following June 15.

Another 21 stocked stream sections are regulated for Catch-and-Release, Fly-Fishing-Only. Fishing in these areas is limited to fly-fishing gear and all trout must be released back into the water.

Anglers should consult the *2007 Fishing Summary* for a complete list of rules applicable to specially regulated trout fishing waters.

"There's rarely a bad time to go trout fishing, and there are some truly great times. Fall in Pennsylvania is one of the best times," said Commission Executive Director Doug Austen. "Autumn brings with it cooler water temperatures and increased feeding activity. It's also a time for true trophy trout fishing with the annual run of large steelhead trout into Lake Erie's tributary streams."

To learn more about fall trout fishing opportunities in Pennsylvania, visit the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**.

Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER

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The 2007 *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* bound edition (Volume 76) is available. Use the form below to reserve your copy. **Please clearly indicate any name(s) to be engraved.** Make checks or money orders payable to: PA Fish & Boat Commission. No CODs, and please do not send cash. Send orders to: Educational Media Services, PA Fish & Boat Commission, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000. **Orders must be received by December 14, 2007.**

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Angler's Notebook by Jerry Bush



photo-Jerry Bush

Many hors d'ourves fish recipes are a cherished addition to any Thanksgiving, holiday or New Year's dinner. In most cases, the specific fish mentioned in a recipe can be replaced with what Pennsylvania anglers have stored in their freezers. Check the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us, for "Fishin' from the Kitchen" columns for other recipe ideas (see opposite page).

Winter bass don't exert energy to chase down fast-moving lures. Anglers who slow the retrieve, or better still, jig baits straight up and down, are more likely to be successful in cold water.

Few holiday gifts will be more appreciated than a photo collage of family and friends sharing good times during past fishing and boating trips. The recipient is sure to appreciate the personal value of your effort.

The metabolism of warmwater fish such as bass, pike and panfish will slow as water temperatures drop. Be especially alert for soft, subtle bites when luring these species. Many strikes go unnoticed when the water is cold.

While your boat is in storage, inspect the prop. If it's nicked or bent, now is a good time to repair it or replace it. New or fixed props can enhance gas mileage, smooth the ride, and increase speed.

Regional Reports

When you visit the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us, be sure to click on the "Regional Reports" pages, on the left side of the main page. There you will find a wealth of information from around the state, including fishing and boating reports, the weekly Erie report and biologist field reports. Aquatic resources program specialists compile the fishing and boating reports with input from waterways conservation officers. The Erie report, compiled by waterways conservation officers, provides details on the steelhead action, area fishing and boating conditions, and events. Area fisheries managers provide the biologist reports, which include information on stream and lake surveys from across the state. All of this information can be valuable in determining where to fish and boat. On the left side of the Commission web site's main page, click on the state map labeled "Regional Reports."

Fishing & Boating Events Calendar

January 4-6, 2008
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission
Great Outdoor Sports Expo
Riverfront Sports Facility, Scranton, PA

January 6-13, 2008
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission
PA Farm Show
PA Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, PA

January 17-20, 2008
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission
Greater Reading Sport, Travel & Outdoor Show
Greater Reading Expo Center, Reading, PA

January 17-20, 2008
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission
Philadelphia Sportsmen's Show
Philadelphia Convention Center, Philadelphia, PA

January 25-27, 2008 & February 1-3, 2008
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission
Pittsburgh Boat Show
David L. Lawrence Convention Center, Pittsburgh, PA

January 23-27, 2008
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission
Harrisburg Auto & Boat Show
PA Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, PA

January 25-27, 2008
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission
The Fly Fishing Show
Garden State Exhibit Center, Somerset, NJ

February 2-10, 2008
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission
Eastern Sports & Outdoor Show
PA Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, PA

February 2, 2008
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission
TU Cabin Fever
Four Point, Cranberry, PA

February 7-10, 2008
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission
Washington Sport Show
Washington Crown Center Mall, Washington, PA

February 13-17, 2008
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission
Allegheny Sport Show
Expomart, Monroeville, PA

February 15-17, 2008
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission
Hamburg Sports Show
Hamburg Fieldhouse, Hamburg, PA

February 17-18, 2008
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission
Cabin Fever Expo
Mifflinburg High School, Mifflinburg, PA

February 29, 2008
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission
Laurel Sportsmen Night Out
Laurel High School, New Castle, PA

February 22-24, 2008
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission
Jaffa Show
Jaffa Center, Altoona, PA

February 9-10, 2008
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission
Butler Fishing Show
Butler High School, Butler, PA

February 29 - March 2, 2008
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission
Erie Outdoor Sport and Travel Show
Bayfront Convention Center, Erie, PA

March 6 - March 9, 2008
Meet the PA Fish & Boat Commission
PA Garden Expo
PA Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, PA



Visiting the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's booth at the Farm Show is a great way to gather information on water trails (above), fishing and boating regulations, the best spots to fish, amphibians and reptiles, and much more.



Ryan Walt helps Jadyn Glenny identify her favorite fish at the Pennsylvania Garden Expo, Harrisburg.

Photos-Spring Gearhart

Proposed Rulemaking, Access Highlight Meeting Action

Proposed new restrictions on some bass tournaments, clarification of acceptable practices on some special regulation fishing waters, and increased public access on Lake Erie tributaries were among the items addressed by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission at its fall quarterly meeting.

Commissioners voted to seek public comment on proposed rulemaking that addresses instances in which an angler fishing from a boat may move from a section of a waterway governed by one set of fishing regulations to a section with more conservative regulations. For example, if one section of stream is managed with conventional Commonwealth inland waters regulations for trout, a creel limit of five fish is in effect from the first Saturday after April 11 until Labor Day and bait is permitted. However, if the next downstream section is regulated under Delayed-Harvest, Artificial-Lures-Only regulations, harvest is permitted only from June 15 until Labor Day, the creel limit during this period is three, and bait is not permitted. Anglers boating from the upstream section to the downstream section any time before June 15 in this example would be in violation of the Delayed-Harvest regulations if they had either trout or bait on board, even though these fish had been taken lawfully and gear used lawfully in the upstream section.

To address this matter, staff proposed that language be inserted in sections related to special fishing regulations to note: "Notwithstanding the requirements of this section, an angler in a boat may possess bait and fish caught in compliance with the seasons, sizes and creel limits in effect for the waters from which taken, provided that the boat angler floats through the {specially regulated area} without stopping or engaging in the act of fishing or the boat angler takes out his boat at an access point within the {specially regulated area}."

The Commission also opted to seek public input on a proposed prohibition on bass fishing tournaments on the West Branch, North Branch and main stem Susquehanna River that permit the harvest of fish. The proposal was generated in response to angler concerns about organized events that focused on taking fish, especially at a time when agency biologists and bass anglers have concerns about relatively weak reproduction of young smallmouth bass in parts of the river system in recent years.

The Commission also chose to acquire property rights for two streamside sections of Lake Erie tributaries. Using funds generated from the sale of the special Lake Erie fishing permits, the Commission elected to move forward with acquiring a 2.2-acre parcel on Crooked Creek, Springfield Township, in Erie County. In addition to the property purchase, the Commission will also acquire a related 1,300-linear-foot fishing easement. This stream section is not currently open for public fishing and completion of the transaction will enhance public use of a stream that the Commission considers to have good potential for expanded steelhead and trout fishing use.

In a related action, the Commission authorized moving forward with acquiring a 2,300-linear-foot fishing easement on Elk Creek, a popular fishing destination in Girard Township, Erie County.

In other action, the Commission:

- Established January 28-29, April 21-22, July 14-15 and October 6-7 as its meeting dates for 2008.
- Voted to increase to 10 horsepower the boat motor size limit for Sugar Lake, Crawford County.
- Added five stream sections in Luzerne County to the list of waters containing Class A wild trout populations." The designation will apply to nearly 21.9 miles on Wapwallopen Creek, Big Wapwallopen Creek, Bow Creek and Balliet Run.
- Approved a $30,000 grant to the Blackleggs Creek Trout Nursery and Watershed Association for a habitat improvement/angler amenity project in Young Township, Indiana County.
- Finalized regulatory language clarifying that boat motors on Cloe Lake, Jefferson County, are restricted to electric motors only.
- Approved proceeding with purchasing a new set of docks for its North East Marina, Erie County.
- Moved to publish a notice of proposed rulemaking that better defines boating safety education certificates and the criteria for boating safety education courses.
- Directed staff to review and update a policy on the development of wind energy in Pennsylvania.
- Okayed initial exploration of establishing an acid rain mitigation project on tributaries to the South Branch of Kinzua Creek in the Allegheny National Forest.
- Proposed amending the limits of the existing slow, no-wake zone on the Allegheny River to make the regulations reflect the area currently posted with signs.
- Authorized staff to lease property rights along Harvey Creek, Luzerne County, from the county government and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.
- Adopted a new fee schedule for Scientific Collectors Permits.

The complete agenda, with additional background information on these items, can be found on the Commission's web site, **www.fish.state.pa.us**. Select "About the PFBC" from the menu bar and click "Agendas & Minutes."

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Ⓒ Pennsylvania Amphibians & Reptiles	$9.43		
Ⓓ Pennsylvania Fishes	$9.43		
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Ⓕ NEW! 2008 PLAY Patch-Muskellunge	$2.83		
Ⓖ 2006 Red-bellied Turtle	$4.71		
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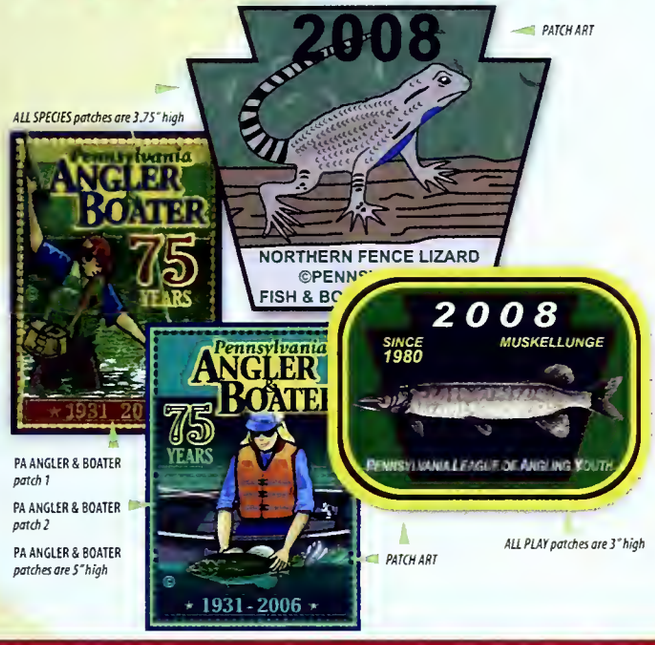
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Cast & Caught

"takemefishing"



David E. Reasey, Carlisle, fished Conococheague Creek, Franklin County, last May and fooled this 8-pound, 9-ounce rainbow trout. The fish measured over 25 inches long and took a scented bait.

George Lindow, Bridgeville, caught this 23-inch, 5-pound walleye in Raccoon Lake, Raccoon State Park, Beaver County, last July. The walleye hit a crankbait.





Barbara Pagano, Abington, used a mealworm last May to lure this golden rainbow trout in Loch Alsh Reservoir, Montgomery County.



Sergeant Major James Peiffer, Hershey, brings in a fish at a pond on Forward Operating Base Freedom, in Baghdad, Iraq.



Matthew Vroman (right) and his son, Jacob, earned Husky Musky Club and Junior Angler awards for landing this 29-pound, 50-inch musky in the northern Dauphin County portion of the Susquehanna River. The fish took a tube jig. Both anglers had to wrestle the fish in because it was far too big for their net.



Stephanie Vargas, an exchange student from Costa Rica, landed a First Fish Award and several nice-sized pumpkinseeds and bluegills at the Everett Sportsmen's Club.



Dave Dudukovich, State College, caught and released this 27-inch, 7-pound steelhead last January in Elk Creek. He lured the fish with white sucker spawn and a gold bead.



Matthew Krotowski (center), age 12, was helping his cousins, Katie Lewis, age 9, and Ryan Lewis, age 7, fish in a pond near Wellsboro when this bass hit. The fish was 21 inches long and weighed about 6 or 7 pounds. They returned the fish to the water after pictures were taken.

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